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That is nothing. That man is far down below in the deep water with his ranga, with his wongar and his old marikmo." 775

The soul of the dead (bir-im-bir) then returns to its totem and the totem lives in the sacred narra well. This is true for both men and women.

A Warumeri clansman was unconscious and near death. The relatives sang the garma sea-way (a cycle of songs about the sea and those totems which are connected with it). While they sang, it was thought, the spirit of marikmo was listening to the song. They then sang crayfish, which is a Warumeri totem. The hand of the dying one moved convulsively like a crayfish. They sang whale, also the clan's totem, and the person dying kicked in imitation of a whale. This meant he was going to die, and he was telling his people. He wanted them to sing his song, it was believed, so that his marikmo and old gatu (father's father's father) would know and come to him. 763 533

The dying one stiffened and was quiet. He was dead according to tribal thought, although his heart beat. "I see that go," one relative said about the heart of the dying man, "and I knew he was dead, but that his marikmo was looking out for him. I could see that because that old man marikmo moved inside his heart. He was taking that spirit back to the Warumeri well." 763

After death and before the burial ceremony, the symbol of the narra well of the deceased is painted on his chest and abdomen—in this instance, the wild duck well. This is done in order that all the dead of the well can see the one who has just died and take him immediately away to his water hole. 764

When, during the Djungguan ceremony for the great snake, Yurlunggur, and during the Narra ceremony for the other totemic emblems, a ranga is made, not only does the totem or the totem's essence enter into it through the singing of the men, but also the birimbir spirits of the dead ancestors—illustrating the close association of the clan members with their totems and dead ancestors. 776 778

The mythological ancestors who are in the well and who had some part in its formation are called old marikmo or old gatu. Their names express clearly the affiliation of the mythical men to the narra well and to the totem.

The names of the wells, as will be seen by examining the list of those belonging to the clans, pages 39-51, show the same totemic affiliation either directly or indirectly. Like the names of the mythological ancestors, they are of two types, the sacred and the camp variety. 778 103

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same moiety is too keen to be overcome by an appeal to moiety solidarity.

Various parts of the ceremonies are used to give expression to the dual division. In the Djungguan ceremony, subsections, when calling up their dead ancestors, are placed in the moiety order; that is, first the four Dua subsections and then the four Yiritja take turns in calling the names and the illustrious deeds of their dead ancestors. At the end of this ceremony, when food is eaten ritualistically, the members of the two groups exchange food. During the Gunabibi only Dua men paint themselves, since it is taboo for Yiritja men so to decorate themselves for this particular ceremony. Dua men, however, cannot construct the great Yer-mer-lin-di totemic emblem, and this duty and privilege devolves upon Yiritja men, in exchange for which service the Dua men present the Yiritja men with food and other presents. The Dua use a round grave post to mark their burial spots or when they wish to erect a monument to the spirit of a newly dead person belonging to their moiety, whereas the coastal Yiritja raise a ceremonial mast for their dead. The Dua use red feather decorations for their Narra ceremonies; the Yiritja use opossum fur.

The totems themselves are largely divided on the basis of the moiety. The list of the clans with their totems, page 39 ff., will show that most clans of one moiety possess their totems in common. There is a considerable regional variation, but the differences are not due to clan divisions. Very occasionally a clan will possess a totem that no other owns, but this is only a temporary condition, for the myth of the two creator women usually is sufficient proof of ownership to other clans, so that in a short time they accept this new totem as their own, provided they belong to the same moiety as the original clan. For example, on the eastern side of Arnhem Land, along the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, all of the Dua clan have totems such as a yam stick, old woman, and young woman, while the Dua clans in the west, which center around the Goyder River, are more concerned with a snake and a complex of totems which surround it, and less with the women and their totemic objects. There seems to be an historical basis for this division which will be discussed later.

The Phratry

There is a weak attempt on the part of the Murngin to form groups of clans within the moiety, based on the mythological idea of a common association with a common creator totem or an alleged similarity

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and go fight them." "No," said Warlumbopo. He had not told Daurlung of his killing their brother's slayer since the latter had been a good friend of Daurlung's. Daurlung said, "Yes, we must go kill our brother's slayer." "You can't kill him now." "Why?" "He's dead." "Who killed him?" "I did." "My own brother! Good! I'll give you two of my wives."[5]

This episode not only illustrates the operation of the junior levirate during the life of an older brother, but shows clearly the solidarity among a group of consanguine brothers and its lack between "far-off" brothers.

Wawa always is at the head of a family of brothers and has the strongest voice in their affairs if the father is very old or dead. However, if wawa is not of an assertive type, whereas one of the younger brothers is, the latter could hold equal authority with him and frequently would have the final decision on any problem that confronted them.

The oldest brother, who has the rights of ceremonial leadership for certain of the clan and moiety ceremonies, usually has the next oldest help him, and they confer over ceremonial matters on an almost equal basis; but, given two personalities of equal strength, the older would be by virtue of his age the more powerful in family affairs.

Usually two brothers cooperate in making a canoe, since of all economic labors this is the most difficult and extends over the greatest period of time. A canoe, too, has the highest economic value of all the Murngin's technological articles. Wawa has the most control over the canoe, although yukiyuko, if a man of will, may have an equal say in its management. If it were traded to another group, all the brothers would feel they had an ownership in it, even if they had not helped make it.

The brothers usually have an equal right to the property of each, although it is definitely known that a spear, a club, a basket, or any other such article belongs to one man and not to the group. A dog is known to belong to one man; yet the other brothers have a feeling of secondary ownership, and the dog recognizes them as secondary masters, much as with us a boy may own a dog and receive primary obedience and loyalty from his pet, while his brothers are secondary masters. These latter would look upon the dog as their brother's, but as "ours" in relation to outsiders.

If a son of one brother dies, the others always join in the ceremonial

[5] There is a full account of this incident in Warlumbopo's life as a warrior in the chapter on warfare, pages 177-190.

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593 dances in the mourning for him. All varieties of brothers within the
•764 clan are included, the activity being really more a clan than a fraternal function.

593 Among brothers within the clan fighting is not allowed, but among
602 brothers who belong to adjoining clans warfare is quite common.

786 Although the Murngin and the other seven tribes who share their
837 type of kinship have a very strong feeling against the younger brother's copulating with an older brother's wife under ordinary circumstances, there is a period among the peoples practicing the Gunabibi ceremony when sexual "license" is recognized and even demanded between brothers and their wives. This is, however, strictly regulated; only brothers from more distant clans would be invited and allowed to exchange wives for ceremonial copulation. The tribal ideal of this custom is that a few nights before the end of the ceremony older brothers call their consanguine younger brothers and ask the latter to go to the nearby camp of the distant brothers in attendance at this ceremony, taking the older men's wives with them. The older brothers in the visitors' camp do likewise. The men and women paint themselves and go into the bush in the nearby jungle for copulation. The last night one woman may stay with several men, for a larger proportion of men than women always attend, since wifeless brothers usually enter into this ceremony. After a man has had intercourse with a tribal brother's wife, the husband puts his sweat on both of his guest's legs "so that he won't be sick from it." The men meanwhile have been
[431] giving presents to the women for some time before the ceremony and the women turn the gifts over to their husbands, although they frequently keep part for themselves. In reality, there is an exchange of presents, as well as of wives, among these more distant brothers.

The above is a tribal ideal. Actually, copulation purely for pleasure
[783 starts early in the ceremony, while the last night's indulgence is a
751] purification rite supposed to cleanse a man and woman of impurities and to avoid illness during the period between the present ceremony and the next. The men and women have clandestine meetings, but it is generally known which people are having these assignations in the surrounding bush or jungle, and many broadly humorous remarks are passed by both sexes about their various lovers. However, some men and women would not enter into this earlier secret copulation, but would wait until the last night.[6]

[6] The ritual place of wife exchange and its significance are treated in the chapter on Murngin totemism, particularly pages 306-308.

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brother's, and, with the father's senility recognized, the oldest son assumes his place as head of the family; at least he is looked to for guidance by the brothers and sisters.

Before circumcision, when a small boy finds a wild bees' nest, the honey of which is a greatly prized delicacy, he goes to tell his father (mari, gawel, and others, too), who will open the hollow tree for the boy and allow him with the aid of his small brothers to eat all of it, but will not eat it himself nor allow any but the brothers to touch it. This rule is very important, for it rests upon a magical idea that the boy will have good luck in the hunt and in later finding large nests. Should a man eat any of the boy's first wild bees' honey, a father would consider this more than sufficient cause to fight him. It is the father who takes the initiative in protecting the small boy's interest.

When a child, particularly a son, becomes ill, the father either treats him magically or uses native remedies. Should a mother neglect her child, or through misadventure allow it to be harmed, most fathers would become angry and beat her, and in some cases try to kill her.

When a son dies, the actual father and his brothers lead in the mourning ceremonies; when a father dies, all the varieties of sons within the limits of the clan cooperate in leading these ceremonies. When the bones of a man are exhumed after burial, it is the father who opens the grave and, with the help of the son's dué (the father's waku), cleans the putrid flesh off the bones.

The death of a son is a great social loss to the father, since there is no one to take his place; but the death of a father is felt less severely by the children. If the children are small, they and their mother pass through the levirate to the father's younger brother. If the children are grown, the father usually has become very old and his death causes them little social loss. The death of a father in our own society creates a greater social maladjustment than in the native society. The Murngin children have been calling the father's brother father, and, further, their behavior toward this younger brother of their father has differed but slightly from that toward their own father. The mother does not go back to her own but continues in the same social group. There is no change in the social adjustment of the children or other members of the kinship system. The personal loss of a father to the family and to society is usually keenly felt, as is the death of sons by a father. When a son dies a father beats his own head and attempts to wound himself to show his sorrow.

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The marikmo-maraitcha reciprocation is far less powerful than the wawa-yukiyuko or bapa-gatu relationship. The female marikmo is seldom considered at all. A marikmo diramo is of more importance to a maraitcha diramo after death than before. It is largely because of this post-mortem relationship that the living tie is of importance.

A spirit child comes from the water hole of the clan where the spirit of the dead marikmo is. This marikmo takes a special interest in the unborn child. A maraitcha receives some of his names, including all his totemic names, from his marikmo diramo. A maraitcha mielk receives her names from her female marikmo and mari.

When a man dies, the spirit of his marikmo comes out of the well for him, and takes the dead man's good soul[10] back to the well whence it had come as a spirit child. When a man lies dying, the spirit of marikmo (also mari) comes to his maraitcha and calls for the spirit to come out and join him. The natives believe that sometimes just as the man dies, while the heart is still beating, the marikmo's spirit enters the heart, and that is why the heart continues to beat. He then takes the soul of the dead man out of the heart and leaves for the other world through the dead man's mouth. Frequently, the spirit of a dead marikmo fights with the mokoi (the evil ghosts who live in jungles) for the spirit of the dead man, for they claim it as theirs. The father and others paint the body of the dead man or woman with the design of the totemic water hole and sing a totemic song so that marikmo can hear and lead his maraitcha to the totemic well and save it from the attacks of the mokoi.

When the bones are exhumed the women carry them for a time. A marikmo mielk helps in this, but her participation is small and of little importance.

A marikmo diramo has a claim on a man's canoe. Both male and female marikmo seem to acquire what powers they have because they are in the patrilineal line and are pale reflections of the father.

Mokul Bapa ⟷ *Gatu* (diramo and mielk) (father's sister ⟷ brother's child)

The varieties of mokul bapa correspond to those of bapa. The mokul bapa, say the natives, is a kind of female father. No taboos surround her relations with gatu except the ordinary restrictions between men and women of the same moiety. Gatu diramo looks upon her not only as a sister to his father, but also as a mother of his dué, a most important person.

[10] Birimbir, warroj see Glossary of Native Terms.

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blood, the heart's blood of a man or woman killed by magic, a hair belt from the head of a dead man, a gondjurma or killing stick used to puncture the heart of a sorcerer's victim, the body of a dead man, a burial platform where a body formerly lay but which has since been removed, the warro or soul which goes to the totemic well, and the mokoi or trickster soul. All of these items have a common element, namely, they are associated with the dead. Each one is directly and primarily related to some aspect of death. The dead, too, are looked upon as "inside," particularly because very shortly after death the sacred totemic emblem is placed upon the body of the dead. Women can no longer look at the corpse, which is immediately wrapped with paper bark and completely covered, exactly like a totemic object. The paper bark is now "outside" and something that the women can look at, while the dead, with the sacred emblem upon it, is now "inside" and dal. The dead belong to the world of the sacred (see mourning rites), and these objects, by their primary association with the dead, partake of this power.

Dal Magicians' Paraphernalia, and Relics.—A third category of dal objects—the paraphernalia of the magician and relics used by the ordinary man to give him extra-mundane aid in his hunting or fishing—are actually only a subdivision of the preceding category, since the power of magicians and the power of relics find their source in the sacredness of the dead.

The heart's blood of a man whose soul has been stolen by a magician is saved, and it often turns up in the hands of a magician or an ordinary layman in the form of a kind of resin, which is supposed to be the hardened blood. This can be used in fighting to give a little extra power, and in hunting or fishing it is used the same way as the shavings of a killing stick, to be described presently. Sometimes the heart's blood is placed inside the white magician's spirit bag to give it extra power. This blood gains extra mana by passing through the possession of a number of people and usually is traded in from more remote regions in the south.

When the body of a man killed by magic or in a spear fight is disinterred and the flesh removed from the bones, the finger bones are often distributed as relics among the clansmen and near relatives. These relics are wrapped in string and placed carefully in the possessor's dilly bag as reminders of the crime they feel has been committed. This is also true of pieces of the spear which remain in the body, and of pieces of bark or wood which the dying man may soak in his blood

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moments, there is little organization of the people to give general community expression. A kind of disorganization has occurred. The women wail, but it is not the organized wailing which one finds in some of the rituals. There is a hesitancy and uncertainty about the actions of the people. The more intense latent antagonisms rise to the surface and some of the relatives may be blamed for the death. For example, when a child dies it is often thought that the father and mother have had sexual intercourse during the later months of pregnancy, which are supposed to be a period of abstinence. The other relatives of the dead child express their antagonism by picking up their spears and attempting to throw them at the offending pair. In one sense this is an organized expression, since they well know that they will be prevented by other relatives from throwing the spears.

After the first wailing at the news of the spearing or sudden death of a member of the clan or of a near relative, a stillness comes over the camp which is very noticeable to anyone accustomed to the general noisiness of all the Murngin camps after dark when the people have eaten. It is at this quiet time that the people express their desires for revenge. A near relative throws a spear on the ground and lets everyone know that he is going to avenge the death, whether it has been caused by the spear of a known enemy or the black magic of an unknown antagonist.

The female relatives of the dead man cut their heads with stone knives or spears or sharp pointed sticks to show their great sorrow. The mothers, sisters, wives, and female maris are the relatives who show the greatest amount of grief and cut themselves the most. A few hours after the death of a man or woman the relatives belonging to his clan, led by the father if he is alive, paint the design of his clan well upon him. For example, if he were a Warumeri or Wangurri clansman he would have the duck well painted upon him. The painting and design are exactly the same as those placed on the body of a young boy when he is being circumcised, and on the body of an adolescent boy after he has seen his totemic emblem. Red ocher is painted all over the body first and then the totemic design is painted on the chest and abdomen and face. The hair is covered with white clay after most of it has been cut off or plucked out to be made into a sacred hair belt. "We pull out the hair of the dead man a few hours after he dies and put red ocher on his head after we do this. We make a hair belt from his hair and look for red parrot feathers to put on it.

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764 765 789 Any relative can make a hair belt for the dead man but the dead man's brother gives that belt to their kutara or mari. Sometimes the brother keeps it. That belt is very good in a fight. It makes you very strong. If you wear that one in a fight you can throw a spear that will go straight and kill that man you throw it at. This belt is good for ceremonies."

764 775 The painting, according to native thought, is so done that the old ancestors can see which totem well the dead man belonged to and carry the soul immediately to its proper resting place. The old dead marikmo is supposed to announce loudly, "Oh, that is my young maraitcha." The evil mokois say, "No, this one belongs to us. We are going to take him." They argue about it, but the design upon the dead man definitely places him in the hands of his proper ancestors who prevent him from getting into the clutches of the evil mokois and take him back to his totem well.

[768] When a man dies his relatives move their camp some little distance away from the grave. Some of them call out, usually the mother, "If you want to see us you can come back now. Don't come back by and by." She is talking to the mokoi spirit rather than the warro spirit (soul) of the man. (See footnote, page 413.) When the mokoi spirit leaves the dead all the mokois of the many men who have died before make noises in the jungle. These evil spirits are calling out to this newly released spirit of the dead man. They make sounds as if they were coughing, for this is the way that mokois talk. They are saying, "Where is our son and our grandson?" The leader of the mourning ceremony calls out when these sounds are heard and the mokoi spirit of the dead man is supposed to come away from his body. The people carry fire sticks and go out to the jungle. There are two lines of them; they join in the center of the dance area, and the spirit is supposed to be in the sac-like space between them. The leader takes a fire stick from a man. He puts the fire stick against his chest and no one can see what he is doing. He runs and shows the fire. This is supposed to drive the spirit into the jungle and to finish his life with the living. It is thought by some that this is for the good soul and by other informants that this is for the bad soul, "and by some it is not believed at all." "We did that for Narnarngo's wife when she died. Marupila and I carried fire and we did not see that spirit. We said to ourselves, 'That whole thing is a lie. You can't see a mokoi that way.' Another time when I wanted to see a mokoi with my own eyes I tried at Elcho

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Island when a man died but I could see no spirit. I think that is a lie."

The father of the dead man or some other near relative has a large cake of palm-nut bread made by the women and divides this food among the members of his own moiety and those of the mother's group. This is supposed to force the dead soul to leave because he is not participating with the rest in the communion. Everyone is afraid to have the soul linger about the camp because it might go looking for fish and turtle and other animal food and frighten these animals away so that the living could not kill them.

The father or other relatives then build a small fire, gather and place on it bunches of green leaves until they are smoking, and then brush them over the bodies of all the people, both male and female, who are relatives of the dead person, with the purpose of chasing away the soul of the dead. This ceremony may be involved with a considerably longer ritual or may consist of the mere brushing of the smoking leaves on the bodies of the relatives.

After the garma fire ritual, mokul bapa, yeppa and mari (male and female) talk among themselves and then to the body and to its dead mari's and old marikmo's souls which are supposed to be by it. "Don't you cause trouble and get angry with us. We are only going to keep this dead man a little while, then we are going to give him to you and you can keep him, but don't you cause trouble." Sometimes the father or near relative dreams that the old grandfather has come to him and has said that he now should be in control of the new soul and wants that soul immediately.

The Garma or Main Camp Ceremony.—Since the various types of garma rituals are interwoven in all parts of the mourning ceremonies it seems best to digress a moment and describe all of them at once. The garma type of ceremony is found among all the clans of the tribes studied (except possibly the Liagaomir and Naladaer clans). The garmas are primarily for mortuary ceremonies but can be used for circumcisions. There is a considerable geographical variation in the kinds of garmas, particularly between those of the tribes centered around the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria and those among the peoples along the Glyde River. There is also a clan variation, since the various clans include in their cycle of songs objects which are of immediate significance to the clan. The clan variation is very slight, however, and usually for the purpose of including references to the totemic well and the objects surrounding it. There is a rather consider-

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764 184 able individual variation, since some leaders will include many more items than others. The material presented here has been selected more or less on the basis of including the normal songs and of what the most informed Murngin considered the ideal way of expressing them. Selections have been made from the clans in the east and west and include garma songs of both moieties in the two regions.

The Warnt-djer (leaf), a garma type of ceremony for the removal of the spirits of the dead, is found among both the Yiritja and Dua clans, except the Liagaomir, Naladaer and Ding Ding. The mast ceremony (mar-ai-yir-ri) is found among the eastern Yiritja clans, including the Gunalbingu, the Warumeri, the Kolpa, Wangurri, Darlwongo, Birkili, Komaits, Burilung, Kiki and Maradunggimi. The Barnumbir or Morning Star ceremony is used only by the Dua clans; it has a general distribution. The western Dua groups use Yurlunggur in their garma ceremonies; the eastern people do not. The cockatoo or ni-erk type of ceremony is found only among the Yiritja clans of both the east and west. The Nierk ceremony is used for the raising of the hollow log coffin and at times for a circumcision which would come immediately after putting up the hollow log. This sequent association of mourning and circumcision rites has a rather important interpretative significance.

764 533 The garma type of songs and ceremonies as well as the Narra has a central core of ritual which is known as the land- and sea-ways. Each moiety has a land-way cycle of garma songs and a sea-way cycle. The sea-way cycle describes the movement of the tide and the sea into the land, up through the tidal rivers, and into the small lakes. The sea-way describes a canoe coming on with the tide. Various activities take place in bringing the canoe in and beaching it. The occupant of the canoe is a Wongar man. Various occurrences while the canoe is coming in show the rise of the tide and its flow into the land. The ritualistic songs and occasional dances in this sea-way cycle express the intimate relations of man to his natural environment, and transmute nature into man's social structure and social values, and man into nature's order. The land-way cycle is the exact opposite of the sea-way. It describes the clouds gathering in the high country, the rain coming from the clouds, the rivulets running into the creeks, the creeks into the larger rivers, and the great rainy-season flood going to the sea. The various creatures associated with this natural phenomenon are brought into the sequence of songs.

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Eastern Yiritja Sea Tide Garma Cycle of Songs and Dances.—The members of the clan and the close relatives, including the wives and their near relatives, gather around a symbolic well, a basin about two feet in diameter scraped out of the ground. The ceremonial leader of the clan beats his singing sticks and directs the singing. The sacred totemic names of the clan well of the dead are sung over it to make it the "well" of the dead. The song, which has a wailing quality, is designed to send the soul away from the group and into the totemic well, and to force the trickster spirit out into the jungle. It also helps purify the living group.

All possessions of the people which are in intimate relation to the body, such as wearing apparel, spear-throwers, spears, tobacco, and the like, are placed in the well. This singing takes place not only in the camps where a man has died, but also in any other camp where his near relatives are living at the time. Certain members of the clan agree among themselves to go out hunting, particularly for the animals which belong to the totem, while other members of the group are selected to sing the garma songs.

The eastern cycle of songs follows:

(1) An island far out in the sea.
(2) Lightning that strikes out in the middle ocean and in the east.
(3) Black cloud (mo-dais).
(4) A wind coming in from the sea.
(5) Calm sea water (ran-gu-ra).
(6) Heavy waves on the surface of the sea (man-bui-na).
(7) A small bird, not identified, that dives into the sea for fish (ba-lin-ta-pi).
(8) Kingfish (guin-go-lo).
(9) A flat white fish (yar-war-i).
(10) Whale.
"That one who throws water like rain" (wi-ma-ri, nal-lan-gi, and mar-ping-o). (The last two names are esoteric.)
(11) Diamond fish (ring-ga).
(12) Crocodile.
"The crocodile sings lightning when it comes in the east and that's when the crocodile lays his eggs and that's when the sting ray gets fat and good to eat. When that lightning comes and the rain comes that makes the sting ray fat, that makes the crocodile lay his eggs. Before that time the sting ray has no fat and he is not worth eating."

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(13) A plank floating on the tide and coming toward the shore (papung, probably a Malay word).
(14) A hollow log floating on the incoming tide (u-lo-ba-ri).
(15) A small oyster found on the plank (rar-i-tji).
(16) Coconuts floating on an incoming tide (ta-on-gil).
(17) The country where the coconut, hollow log, and plank come from.
"We don't know what that country is. No people are there. We only sing it because the old old people sang it that way."
(18) The back of a turtle (near land) (go-ar-tji).
(19) The head of a tortoise-shell turtle (wil-ar-a).
(20) People where the coconuts come from—the east (ki-lur-o).
(21) Paddle (mar-ra-la).
(22) Canoe (li-pal-pa).
(23) Noise the paddle makes on the gunwale (ma-la-o-ma).
(24) A small bird crying out on the beach when it sees the people coming in from the canoe (go-lo-wit-pit).
(25) Paddle (mar-ra-la).
(26) The paddles being thrown on the beach.
(27) Canoe rolling about on the beach with the sea hitting against it.
(28) Men walking along on the beach.
(29) Men looking for turtle eggs in the sand beach.
(30) Men following the tracks of turtles going toward the nest.
(31) The turtle nest (ka-tji-ng).
(32) Turtle eggs.
The men are drinking the white of the turtle egg (i-di-ka).
(33) Basket (kan-nan-gir).
The men are putting the eggs in the basket.
(34) Putting the basket on the shoulder and carrying it down to the shade.
(35) Putting the eggs down in the shade.
(36) Walking fast down the large path to the well.
(37) Cleaning the dirt and refuse out of the well.
(38) Washing oneself with the water because of the dirt on the body from cleaning out the well.

764 533 787 It is at this place in the song sequence that some of the men get into the symbolic basin, the water from the melon shells is poured over them, they wash and cover themselves with red ocher. These are men to whom the dead relative has appeared in a dream. They are washing away his soul because it would make them sick. "You have a good friend of yours who is dead a little while ago; you feel very sorry. At night you go to sleep. You dream and he comes to see you. You sing this garma song the way we do this. You won't worry any more. You

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won't dream any more. But suppose you didn't have these songs, that spirit would come and make you sick and maybe kill you.—When we dream of our dead relative we ask our brothers to sing for us while we go hunt for turtle. We come back, get all our things, our spears and our dilly bags and our belts, put them in the well and sing over them."

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(39) Taking off ornaments and drying them on the well.
(40) Going back to the turtle beach, cleaning off dirt under the big trees. (The leaves are now brought in for the fire and smoke ritual.)
(41) Gathering wood for a fire.
(42) Fire burning.
(43) Coals of a fire smoking.
(44) People are sleepy and they sleep.
(45) Waking up.
(46) Smoking a cigarette.
"The smoke goes up from the tobacco (na-rai-li)."
(47) Red cloud (ri-pa).
That smoke went up into the sky and made a red cloud. The red cloud song indicates the singing is completed.

Eastern Dua Sea Cycle of Songs.—The eastern Dua clans, namely, those found around Buckingham and Arnhem Bays along the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, possess the following sequence of garma songs and dances. The first song usually sung in this area is about a Wongar yolno, who was paddling a canoe out in the ocean.

(1) Wongar yolno (mi-tja-lo).
(2) Black sea grass (dji-o-el).
(3) A sea bird (dja-rok).
(4) A very small fish (yint-gar).
(5) A salt-water snake (yar-luer).
(6) Salt-water turtle (ka-ri-wa).
(7) A floating hollow log (wir-o-ko).
(8) The tide going out (ka-pu-mon-oak).
(9) The tide is standing still far out (ka-pu u-tu nor-o-tin kan-ga).
(10) Burial log (dai-mer-i).
"He walks around on the bottom of the sea, he is a Wongar. We only see him at night and he looks like a hollow log."
(11) "The man [Wongar yolno] is coming to the shore now. The tide is rolling the canoe in and it is high tide" (tur-ri-u-na, "pumping out that canoe").
(12) Paddle (ma-tin): danced by women.
They carry the paddles on their shoulders, put them in the shade. The yolno is supposed to be walking around now look-

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ing for turtle eggs. He looks down and finds the nest, puts the eggs in the basket, returns to the shade, and sits down.

(13) Ring around the fire (ko-mer-nin-na).
This is a ring of men around a fire. The Wongar yolno has brought in some fire wood and broken it up and made a fire to cook the turtle eggs.

At this place in the ceremony they take the green branches of a tree, put them in the fire, and the men ceremonially brush the smoking branches over the heads and chests of all participants and near relatives of the man who has died. "That spirit of the dead man goes away now. That means the souls of our own people, not our enemies."

(14) The man sits down and goes to sleep, wakes up and goes away.
(15) He takes fire sticks, walks around and puts fire to the grass, which makes a big bush fire. The fire smoke goes up into the heavens, into the clouds. The dancers, while this is going on, dance with fire sticks in their hands.
(16) The Wongar snake in the sky (u-var-ko).
(17) Another large snake (dar-pa).
(18) Caterpillar.
(19) The fire which has been built is in a small basin (symbolic totemic water hole). It is a snake camp.

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On one side are two lines of snake dancers, one Uvarko and the other Darpa. Facing them on the other side of the fire are two lines of caterpillar dancers. (The caterpillars are classed as snakes among the Murngin.) To one side of the fire and between the two lines of dancers are the iguanas. While the snakes and caterpillars dance back and forth beside the fire the iguanas stamp on the fire and put it out. The snakes are supposed to be going to fight, but the extinction of the fire in the totem well by the iguanas means that all the people in this country are one people. Each dancer carries a basket in his mouth to symbolize a fighting man, and each carries a spear shaft or stick and moves it to represent the head of a snake.

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(20) Hermit crab.
The men hold bushes up in front of themselves and hit their chests, keeping time to the rhythm.
(21) Blow fly (wor-or-lorl).
The dancers simulate the buzzing of the fly and move their hands back and forth to imitate the vibration of its wings.
(22) A shore bird (por-leur-or).
One of the dancers moves his legs rapidly up and down and

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stamps on the ground and flutters his arms up and down to indicate the bird is flying away.

(23) Morning star (bar-num-bir).

Everyone carries fire sticks. The dancers move back and forth before the leader of the ceremony, moving the fire sticks up and down in the darkness. Moving them up is supposed to represent darkness, and down, daylight.

The Morning Star Ceremony.[8]—The morning star ceremony is Dua. The song cycle starts with Barnumbir (morning star):

Gar-le-in-bui
East
Yal-main-aoi
Morning star
Djan-gir-ir
Morning star
Ma-rang-in
Morning star

Chorus: Aa-ee kai kai kai kai

Barnumbir yea-a-a

Gar-le-in-bui
East
Yal-main-aoi
Morning star
Djan-gir-ir
Morning star
Ma-rang-in
Morning star

Chorus: Kai kai kai kai

Yo yo-o-o

If the first song is at night, the men dance with firebrands, and if in the afternoon, with bunches of white cockatoo feathers tied to strings. The leader and chorus stand off at the side. The chorus are supposed to be mokois.

(2) Mokois (gurn-dju-la); the chorus is then repeated.
(3) Mokoi food, a small tuber.
(4) Butterfly (burn-ba).

[8] The Murngin have a long myth which is associated with the Barnumbir ritual. See Appendix VIII.

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The butterfly is closely associated with the morning star and lives on top of it.

(5) A small paper-bark tree, sung because the morning star and the mokois light on top of it in their flight over the jungles.

(6) Bat (gar-nat-bin).

"This one flies on top of the sky with the mokois at night time. We are afraid when we hear that noise at night that this bat makes because he has got mokois with him."

(7) Ibis, the black variety.

"When the mokois walk around they look at that ibis, and he looks at them, and we can tell when they are around because he looks at them."

(8) The name of the land on the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria (Cape Wilberforce) where the morning star first lights.

(9) Fire.

(10) An unidentified bird closely associated with the mokois.

(11) The darpa snake.

(12) The flower of the paper-bark tree.

(13) The bark of this tree.

"The Morning Star is going into the bush now. This tree bark wrapped around the corpse makes that spirit feel good."

(14) A small parrakeet.

This is sung because he eats the flowers in the trees.

(15) The slender long-headed type of honeybee.

(16) Crow.

(17) Pandanus basket in which the honey is placed.

(18) Grass, the kind that is dipped into the honey to eat it.

(19) Boomerang.

(20) Spear-thrower and stone spear.

(21) Kangaroo, the Dua variety.

(22) A small unidentified bird.

(23) Rock python.

(24) Rain.

(25) A rock ledge.

(26) Pandanus.

(27) The long type of yam, Dua variety.

(28) Mosquito.

(29) Rain.

"That rain makes the yam and everything grow up and good."

(30) The rope for a harpoon.

(31) The paddle used in a harpooning expedition.

(32) Porpoise.

(33) Sea grass that the turtle eats.

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(34) Rain.
(35) The hollow log coffin.
(36) Small fish.
"He is that fish that goes inside the woman. It is a very small one. He floats around in the water and goes inside that hollow log."
(37) Salt-water snake with a flat tail (yarl-lur).
(38) Low tide.
(39) A stone fire.
(40) Cutting up the turtle.
(41) Lighting the fire.
(42) Smoke from the fire going into the clouds.
(43) The cloud where the snake lives.
(44) Rain.
(45) A small bird.
(46) A man standing on a rock burning off the top of the rock.
(47) Barnumbir.

The Dua Land or Flood Cycle

(1) A Wongar yolno walking around.
(2) Stone spear.
"That spear belongs to him."
(3) Spear-thrower.
(4) Wongar yolno sneaking up to kill that kangaroo.
(5) He kills that kangaroo and carries him on his back.
(6) He is sitting down now cutting him up and eating him.
(7) Red cloud.
"That is the blood that belongs to this kangaroo."

The kangaroo element in the song sequence can be removed according to the totem clan and some other animal such as turtle put in its place. Killing of the kangaroo refers to death, and cutting up the kangaroo is a reference to the exhumation of the body after death.

(8) Fire stick.
(9) Walking away.
(10) A honey basket.
(11) Carrying the honey basket.
(12) Biting the honey basket and spitting it out.
"That is to make rain."
(13) A small parrakeet.
(14) Stringy bark flower.
(15) The Dua honeybee.
(16) Wasp.

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(17) Big-eared lizard.
(18) Caterpillar.
(The honeybee, wasp, lizard and caterpillar are totemic objects in the Dua moiety.)
(19) A sea gull.
(20) Barnumbir ceremonial string.
(21) Crow.
(22) Small stringy-bark tree.
(23) A small black stone found in the bush.
(24) Boomerang.
This is sung because the boomerang is associated with people in the farther interior.
(25) The tide carrying the man [Wongar yolno] down to the sea.
(26) A beach on the ocean.
(27) A bark water carrier.
(28) Making it.
(29) Pulling up water from a totem well, washing himself.
As in the other garma cycles, the various relatives ceremonially wash themselves in the symbolic totemic well.
(30) Leaving the well.
(31) Making a stick with human hair on top of it "which is just the same as the stringy-bark flower, and that flower is all the same as a man's hair."
(32) Putting the stick in the ground with other sticks like it and dancing. This offers an opportunity for the Barnumbir morning star ceremony.
(33) Putting a white feathered string on the sticks.
(34) Making a fire to cook food.
(At this part of the singing the men are brushed with smoking leaves and sometimes dance with firebrands stuck in their armpits so that the smoke pours over them.)
(35) A very low tide.
(36) A hollow tree lying on the beach.
Reference is to the hollow log in which the bones are placed.
(37) Pelican.
The pelican's bill is supposed to be a net which catches the soul (see makarata dances).
(38) Fish net.
The fish net is the same as the pelican.
(39) Salmon fish.
(40) Mullet.
(41) Dua fish.
Fish are supposed to be the souls of dead men caught in the nets.

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(42) Wallaby carrying a spear and looking for fish.
The wallaby and kangaroo are always said to act like men and frequently symbolize man. "Kangaroo was a man at that time. He was just the same as we proper people that first time."
(43) The sun.
"The sun and that wallaby have gone into the bush, way inside, to make a camp."
(44) Shade in the western sky; the sun is in the east.
(45) A shade comes back this way.
(46) A kangaroo comes along with the shade.
(47) Afternoon.
"Sing Kangaroo jumping around slowly in the afternoon and going back again to the jungle."
(48) Wongar yolno.
"He goes back to his house in the bush too. He cleans the leaf away and makes him a good camp."
(49) Spear and mangel.
"He picks his spear and mangel up and dances."
(50) Red cloud.
The element used to finish the ceremony.

The red cloud is also supposed to appear in the skies just before night falls, and that is the reason, according to the Murngin, why it is used to symbolize the end of the ceremony.

Yiritja Garma Land or Flood Cycle

(1) Black rain cloud.
"That cloud is ready for rain to fall down."
(2) A very heavy rain falling down.
(3) Water running down in a small creek.
"That water is running in a larger stream."
(4) Brook in the rain season when it is swollen with floods.
(5) Fresh-water turtle.
"When the fresh water starts running up high this fresh-water turtle swims along with it just like he has come up out of the ground through the spring water."
(6) Leech.
"His house is in the fresh water and he wriggles around. He is always with fresh-water turtle."
(7) Hollow log.
"This running water has thrown it across the stream and that log has stuck there"—an indirect reference to the log used for the interment of the bones.

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(8) Grass used for armlets.
"The grass is growing up now because of that water."

(9) Barrimundi.
"Barrimundi is in the lily place; Barrimundi has come out from the salt water to meet the schools of fresh-water fish coming down from the bush."

(10) A small red bird with a white breast.
"That bird is looking for fish, he eats minnows and he likes lice."

(11) Slow water.
"The water is running slower now. It stops quiet and is not running the way it did."

(12) A man walking along the side of the creek.

(13) Nierk cockatoo.
"He is up in the tree and he is looking at that man and he is calling out at him"—again a reference to the mokoi soul (cockatoo) and the man walking around below who is the warro.

(14) A small bird which eats ants, butterflies and insects.

(15) The warnba's nest.
"We also sing yea for that bird when we sing that. When that small bird grows up his mother will teach him how to sing and say our language. We people talk, that bird answers back. He talks like a man."

(16) A variety of ibis.
"He is standing up looking for the fish and he sees them jumping about. He tries to catch them but he can't." The ibis is also associated with the mokois, and the fish with the true soul, and this again is an indirect reference to the attempts of the mokois to steal the true soul and prevent it from entering into the totem well.

(17) A man and woman walking around on the plain.
"They are Yiritja people."

(18) Spear fight.
"Everybody is running back and forth fighting"; a fight takes place between the ancestors and the living, a ritualistic spear fight.

(19) Crocodiles.
When a makarata is going to be fought or the time when a near fight is on, some of the fighters paint themselves with white lines to symbolize crocodiles.

(20) Fresh-water turtle.

(21) Wild dog.
The wild dog is also in this fight.

(22) A cockatoo flock.

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"They see these fighting people and they fly up out of the trees, singing out." 764 533

(23) A man and woman looking for lilies.
"They are looking at the black duck in the lily places." This is a reference to the totem of the Warumeri, Wangurri, and Ritarngo Yiritja people.

(24) All the people going down to look for lilies (Yiritja people only).

(25) Mud taken up looking for lilies.

(26) Washing the lilies in the water to remove the mud.

(27) Washing themselves off after the mud has got on them.
This element in the sequence is often used for the ceremonial washing in the symbolic totemic well.

(28) Lilies in a basket.

(29) Walking from the lily place "to go look for a dry place to sit down."

(30) Taking a fire stick and burning the grass (Yiritja grass) to make a place for a camp. The burning leaves may be used to be brushed over the bodies of the mourners.

(31) Grass burning rapidly over the plains—a direct reference to burning the grass to facilitate hunting and to clear the paths, and an indirect reference to the smoke ceremony which chases away not only the mokois but the true soul of the dead.

(32) Rats.
"The rats are on the plain and they are running away from the fire. They are singing and are crying out." The rats have an inner meaning which refers to the souls of the dead leaving.

(33) Words and talk.
"The people are sitting down in the shade now and talking. They are talking about the sun going down."

(34) Spider.
"The spiders come out in the cool when the sun goes down. The spider puts up his web from tree to tree. He takes his string one place and goes to another place."

This ends the sequence of songs. At this point in the ceremony a man comes out and dances in front of the chorus holding his legs very high and moving his hands to imitate a spider spinning a large web. The spider is definitely associated with the soul of the dead. "We sing this way because our older people sang that way. All Yiritja sing that way. Dua sing different when their dead men die. I take my songs from my mari [mother's mother's brother] and my marikmo [father's father]; they [the relatives] are Yiritja." 764 [533]

"We sing for that warro soul and which way he has gone. He walks 764 775

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764 around the same way we sing. That food the relatives of that dead
115 man give me when I sing this song so I can take those smoking leaves and put them in the fire and chase that spirit away and so we can go out hunting and that spirit will not bother us."

764 The living relatives talk to the recent dead both before burial and after, and continue until the bones have been exhumed, painted, and placed in the hollow log for their final interment.

764 In preparing the body for burial by painting the totemic design of
533 the man's clan upon its chest and abdomen, one man usually stands by with his singing sticks and leads the singing while the others paint. He sings a list of garma songs, including a list of the paints being used in decorating the body. He then sings string and bark for tying up the body in a paper-bark coffin. The singing continues while the paper bark is being placed over the body and tied into position. When this operation is completed the singer sings the red cloud element in the song sequence, which is a symbol of the end of the song and of the operation.

764 *The Mast Ceremony.*—The relatives then call out for all the people
533 to appear. They sing a new song cycle, the first element in which is a ship's mast that belonged to a Wongar Macassar.[4] Two or more men
177 pick up the dead body and move it up and down as though they were lifting a mast. The chorus sings "Oh—a—ha—la!!" while the "mast" is laid down. When it is picked up again they sing

"O—o—o—o—a—ha—la!
A—ha—la!!
A—ha—la!!"

764 "The Macassar mast was like that," said my informant while view-
177 ing a burial ceremony with me. "Macassar man sang out when he raised a mast and when he did that all of us black men ran from our camps to see him go because all of us knew then that the Macassar was ready to go away. Some people would say, 'What's the matter with those Macassars, what are they doing?' and other people would say, 'Oh, they are going to another place because their mast is standing up straight.' This is all the same as that dead man because he is ready to go away. We people say the same thing about him. 'What is the matter with him?' and it is like that dead man saying back, 'I am standing up straight now, I am going away.' It is like an old Wongar

[4] For a full account of the influence of the Malay culture on the Murngin, see Social Change in North Australia, Appendix I.

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Macassar man saying, 'I want to go over that sundown way, my grandfather is there.'"

Two men stand over the body, each with one hand over his face and one hand thrust out straight over "the mast." The first two men continue to move the "mast" up and down. Within the circle of relatives watching the ceremony and part of the center of attention are two other men who dance as though they were pulling on ropes that raise the mast. All the people are very quiet. The singing sticks continue to beat, but they accentuate the general quietness of the group. Two men in unison say what the natives believe to be a Macassar prayer (Djel-la-war, Malay term):

"Si-li-la-mo-ha-mo ha-mo-sil-li-li,"
(A native who had been with the Macassars and who understood some English because of recent mission contact said, "This is just the same as amen.")
"Si-li-nai-yu ma-u-lai,"
("They are asking something in the clouds or maybe it is in the moon.")
"Ra-bin-a-la la-ha-ma-ha-ma,"
("They ask again for something from that man god who lives in the moon.")
"Ser-ri ma-kas-si,"
(Save man,)
"Bel-la bel-la,"
(Watch,)
"Daung,"
(Me from that danger thing.)

"The Macassar man sang that when the mast broke or when a man was about to die."

After the two men have prayed in unison, the chorus cries, "Djil-li-le!" There is a repetition of the prayer, and the chorus once more cries, "Djil-li-le!" which is supposed to be the cry of the Macassar sailors when they made the mast stand up straight and it was finally attached to the deck. The last time the Djil-li-le is cried out it is continued with Li-li-li-li, which means that the anchor is up. The singing stick now speeds up its rhythm for the putting of the sail on the mast. All the people now start a very grotesque fast dance with first one leg bent at an extreme angle high in the air, and then the other, the arms going through the motion of pulling ropes on a sail. The dancing, all of which is supposed to belong to the Wongar Macassar men, con-

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764 tinues to the open grave, the corpse being carried as though it were a mast.

Anyone can carry the body to the grave. The pallbearer can be either Yiritja or Dua. There is only one exception theoretically to that rule, and that occurs between gawel and waku; neither can carry the other's dead body. Each must keep away from the sweat of the dead man. If either should touch the body of his dead relative, he would not be able to eat food. If he should eat food, he would get a sore in his stomach.

764 533 The garma singing and dancing that now takes place may last from the early morning until the late evening, but ordinarily it would occur only in the late afternoon. The cycle of songs sung can be either the sea or land group; sometimes both of them are sung. When the body is put in the grave the leader calls out the sacred power names, and also sings the sacred names of the totem well.

If the man were Yiritja, let us say Warumeri clansman, the leader would call out the following names:

Bir-ka bir-ka djar-a
(Ceremonial expression of the Yiritja moiety, spring water)
Bir-ka bir-ka mil-yar-ui
"A tree coming from the spring"
Bir-ka bir-ka ga-urn ga-urn
"Pebbles boiling in the spring water"
Bir-ka bir-ka ka-ka-lor-ui
"Small stones in the bottom of the spring"
Bir-ka bir-ka kar-a-ki-ar-oi
"Small valley where the spring water runs."

764 The corpse is then put into the grave, which is symbolically the sacred well of the dead man and his clan. The grave is about four feet deep. The corpse is placed face down and the body is laid out straight. If the knee should pull up it is straightened out. Flexed burial is not practiced here. The natives do not know why they put the body face downward.

764 775 The calling out of the sacred names is supposed to be a signal to the marikmo and mari of the deceased to come and guide the soul to the totem well. After the several cycles of songs have been sung, the leader sings out earth. The earth is symbolically neither Dua nor Yiritja, and everyone including men, women, and children, throws a certain amount of earth into the open grave. The spirit is supposed to be under

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the dirt but the marikmo can pick him out and take him away. The earth is heaped over the body, grass is put on top and, at times, stones. Everyone leaves then and eats his evening meal.

A man is buried by his people so that he will rot and the flesh can be prepared for removal from the bones. The people who bury their dead say they do it so they won't have to see him rot.

(In platform burial the body is placed face upward so that when the abdominal wall breaks the intestines will not fall. The platform is not torn down when a body is removed. It is always avoided thereafter, although the feeling is rather slight about it. Ordinarily women feel a greater sense of taboo about it than men. They always pass by at some little distance because "they are afraid that that mokoi is still there." The men, when they are with the women, sometimes tease them by grunting and coughing like mokois, and laugh when the women jump. The women laugh too, but usually not until later.)

The men then call out the names of the dead male mari and marikmo of the dead man. The groups, singing, quarrel with the people for what they did to the deceased, and the dead ancestors are supposed to blame the living for not taking better care of the dead person when he was alive. While this singing is going on, the chorus dances with spears and knives to simulate a fight between the living and the dead. Once more the garma cycle of songs is sung. The people then clap their hands, symbolical of the Macassar drum, and finally the red cloud element in the garma sequence is sung to indicate that the ceremony is over.

The Grave Post.—The next day, or a few days after the burial, the grave post is erected and a mast of a Macassar design is also placed over the grave. Both the grave post and the mast are carried through the camp while a Murngin version of a Macassar prayer is said over it and the chorus sing a response to the prayer. Food is begged from all the members of the camp who are not participating as near relatives in the ceremony. All the male relatives of the deceased who are later ceremonially to eat the food in ritual communion, paint themselves. The designs are those of the totem of the man who died, which usually means the totem of all the men engaged in the ceremony except those on the mother's side of the kinship group. When a Warumeri dies, for example, the men paint themselves as whales just as the dead body has been painted and as his totemic emblem and poles are painted. The post also announces to the ancestors that the body is buried beneath it.

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764 Two basins symbolic of totem wells are made over the grave by heaping up earth into two separate compartments with channels leading out from them. The wells represented are the dead man's and those of his nati, which means that they belong to both moieties, and both sides of the man's elementary family of orientation are symbolized. These wells are made for both the Yiritja and the Dua kinsmen to eat in. All the men of the nearby clans who are relatives of the dead gather there and eat the food that has been prepared in the camp. If anyone else attempted to eat there it would cause trouble among the near kin.

The putting up of the mast over the grave symbolizes the people telling the departed one a final goodbye. The grave post, in the eyes of the natives, "is just the same as the dead body. It means that you can look at the grave post and remember where the soul has gone." Grave posts are also put up in the camps which are far distant from the grave of the dead. Additional grave posts are erected if a man is felt [554] to be important. Children and women ordinarily would not have more than one grave post erected for them. Sometimes in the case of children no posts are erected. The grave posts of the Dua people are supposed to be symbolic of the two Wawilak sisters.

The grave of a child is usually placed within the main camp. The grave of an older person is usually at the edge of the camp. Sometimes 769 when the people have left a grave and gone to another place a chance 775 visitor who has not heard of the death arrives in the camp and discovers the grave. This makes matters difficult for him because he is liable to be followed and have tricks played on him by the mokoi of the dead person. There is a method, however, of fooling the evil spirit. The man who has been placed in this embarrassing position goes to a nearby tree and makes a small toy spear and spear-thrower and hides his own spears and spear-thrower in the bush. He takes the play spear and spear-thrower to the newly made grave and he addresses the mokoi, "Now don't you follow me. I am going to come back." He puts the spear and spear-thrower on the grave to prove that he will return, since no man would walk around in the bush without his spear-thrower and spears. The man then returns to his own spear and spear-thrower, and the mokoi, who has been fooled, does not follow him.

765 While the grave post is up and before the bones have been exhumed and placed in the hollow log, outsiders are not allowed in the immediate camp of the parents or near relatives of the deceased. At this time the house of the parents is burned, the garma dance is held,

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CHAPTER XIII

INTERPRETATION OF MURNGIN DEATH RITUALS—AN INTEGRATION OF MURNGIN SOCIETY

ALL THE elements of the mortuary ritual are designed, first, to remove the profane part of the human being who has died and, second, to spiritualize his soul and make it like his totem. The first ceremony sung over the dead (see pages 413-414) demonstrates the intent of the whole ritual. The names of the totems are sung to enable the dying man to act like his totem and become like it, that is, to be completely spiritualized and to remove any of the profane part of his personality. The intent of the ceremony is further demonstrated by the direct native interpretation of the actions of the individual who is mortally wounded in a fight and who performs his totemic dance to direct his soul to his well. In addition, his grandfather or collateral dead kin are believed to come for him to aid him to his well and prevent evil spirits from getting him. The totemic emblem aids their identification of him and makes him "all the same as a totem," just as the carved wooden stick or a wad of bark becomes the totem when it has the emblem placed on it and is ritually sung over. The singing of the garma songs helps direct the soul to the water hole, for "we sing for that warro (soul)—he walks the way we sing." The grave is made symbolically into the sacred totemic well and the Macassar leaving ceremony tells the soul of the dead a last farewell. The grave post and mast are also symbols of this final goodbye. In the exhumation ceremony of some of the clans the body is symbolically speared because it is a whale (totem). The temporary bark receptacle is painted with the totemic emblems, and the coffin itself, which is the final repository of the bones, is a mythical creature associated with the totem. All this clearly shows that one of the primary motives of the ceremony is symbolically to translate the soul out of all profane and worldly contacts and place it finally in the sacred totemic water hole. Another fundamental motif in the mourning ritual is to remove all contact of the dead from the living. The dead person is powerful because he is now a

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182 soul and because he has died by magic; these two concepts enter pro-
•764 foundly into Murngin thinking about their dead relative. As a soul he
115 can be properly handled by ritual and translated back to the world of
765 the dead, but as a victim of magic—and all the dead are such victims —he is very dangerous (see the chapter on magic). There are, then, a whole series of purificatory rites which serve to sever the dead's relationship to the living. They are of two varieties: the first is symbolically to force the separation from the living, and the second to propitiate the soul and tell it to go quietly to its totem well and not hurt the living. The second variety tends to prolong the ceremony as if the living people were loath to give up the soul to the dead. The first takes concrete symbolic form in the fire ceremonies which chase the soul away, the spider web dance which catches the soul, the pelican or net dance which does the same, and the removal from the group of the scapegoat who has carried the bones. In the second the songs express the indignation of the dead ancestors toward the living because the recently dead was not given better treatment and because the bones were retained by the female relatives.

182 The last primary motif in the mourning rites is found in the various
765 symbolic rituals performed to reintegrate the society, close its ranks after the removal of one of its members, and once more assert its solidarity. Ceremonial food is gathered from the whole group and eaten in the sacred wells made over the deceased's grave and at various other times during the ceremonies. The entire group paints itself and participates in the communion. This general participation is also to prevent the magic which killed the dead from harming the living. The symbolic expression of group solidarity (if the writer's theory of magic is correct) prevents the harmful effects of magic from spreading.

182 The relatives of the dead cannot be in too great haste to dispose of
764 the body or remove the soul from contact with the living, but neither
761 can they keep the soul too long, ("don't be too angry with us,"--see page 417). In either case the ancestors would not like it and would be offended. The living relatives have an ambivalent attitude toward their dead relative. They feel the strong social bond they once had for him. There is a consequent desire to keep him a part of the living and with them, and there is at the same time a feeling of abhorrence and repugnance. The long mourning ritual expresses these contradictions of attitude.

182 The burial of the body for several months allows the emotions of
765

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for the Malay in the native cosmic ideology, just as the myths have been added to in order to account for the white man and his civilization; but all these changes are purely superficial and but additional facts seeded into native cosmologies.

At the end of their visits in Australia the Malays always lifted their masts, which had been taken down, and fastened them securely to the decks as part of their final preparation for departure. It is possible that there was a slight ceremony involved in this. The Murngin have taken the activities that surrounded the raising of the mast and transplanted them as a ritual into part of their burial ceremony. This has not been done by all of the clans, but is confined to only a few of the groups of the Yiritja moiety. The lifting of the mast by the Malays meant to the Murngin that they were leaving for that year, and, in a way, it symbolized their farewell to Australia in the minds of the Murngin. The idea of the departure of the Malay ship has been transferred to the idea of the departure of the soul of the dead.

The corpse is lifted in the same way as Malays were supposed to have raised their mast, and the natives chant a pidgin variety of Malay which seems to be a version of Malay chanting. When the body is raised from the ground to be taken to the grave, two men say a Malay prayer over it.—The prayer is supposed to mean, according to my native informants, that they are asking for a safe journey for the soul, that no trouble will come to it, just as the Malay, in his prayer, asked for a safe voyage for his ship. This prayer was said by the Malays, according to native ideas, during a storm and before they left for their homelands.—The natives then dance a ceremonial pulling-up of the anchor while taking the body to the grave. A mast is raised over the grave as a memorial.

All this is of particular interest to the student of symbolism and ritual, since it clearly demonstrates some of the methods by which abstract ideas are put into concrete form and the various elements of culture integrated into a single unity in the minds of the people and in their group actions.

Some of the coastal clans have added articles of Malay material culture to their list of multiple totems. Each clan has a large number of totems which are ranked according to their emotional mythological importance. The Malay totems usually belong to the garma class, which is the lowest and can be seen by women. This is not so much the direct influence of Malay culture as the inclusion of new facts into Murngin classifications. The whole of their world (animal, plant, mineral, cultural, et cetera), has been symbolized into a totemic system. It would be strange indeed if the culture did not find a place for the Malay and the contents of his culture. At present there is a tendency to substitute the white man and his civilization for the Malay in the totemic system.

Malay Influence on the Racial Stock.—It is surprising to the investigator

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whites of the north have for the black men of this district. The killing of several whites and Japanese has put a heavy fear in the hearts of all intruders into these parts. The natives have a reputation for treachery, largely because of their ambushing of several white pearlers and night attacks on a few Japanese boats, where all the men were killed, in retaliation for mistreatment of their women.

These last few remarks have been added further to substantiate the possible causes which prevented race mixture when the Malays were coming into North Australia. Since the rapacious civilization of the West cannot produce half-castes in this region, it is less probable that the more gentle Malay culture would produce racial hybrids in North Australia. Tindale, in his article on the Groote Eylandt natives, says that the Malays were interested in acquiring native women to take home with them. I can find no evidence of this among the Murngin and their neighboring tribes. A number of native men, however, did go to Macassar and the other islands whence the Malays had come. The writer met one or two of these men who had served as pearlers on seasonal voyages on Malay boats.

The influence of the Malay race and culture has not been important in northeastern Arnhem Land. There are but slight traces of hybridization in race or culture. The greatest influence is found in the material culture, and the least in the social institutions of Murngin civilization. Compared with the total number of traits found in aboriginal culture, those added from the more eastern civilization are very few indeed and, with the exception of the dugout complex, have had no significant influence on the development of Murngin civilization. On the other hand, when an examination is made of the even larger number of traits found in Malay culture, and they are contrasted with the very few adopted by the Murngin from the Malays, it becomes even further demonstrable that Murngin civilization remained very near to what it was before the Malay arrived, and that the Malay gave little of his own civilization to aboriginal Australia.

History of Burial Customs

The Murngin now finally dispose of their dead by placing the bones in a symbolically carved hollow log and planting the log upright within the camp. This is true of all the tribes except those in Cape Wessel Island, where the natives, after wrapping the bones of the dead in paper bark, put them in rock shelters. I am told by island natives that the rock shelter is used also in the interior back of Blue Mud Bay. All the natives to the west, such as the Gunwingu and Maung, use the hollow-log method of disposal. Historically this situation raises an interesting problem of priority of burial customs. The distribution of the rock burial method in the far

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north and southeast on the periphery not only of the Murngin but also of the whole of Australia suggests that this method was first and that the hollow log is a later intrusion. Against this is the fact that the use of the hollow log as a bone repository is not an isolated item in Murngin material culture, for the log is used as a basic material for the making of a number of objects such as the trumpet and the drum and their smoking pipes.

An examination of these last three objects from an historical point of view proves fruitful when we remember that the pipe is quite recent in Murngin culture, having been brought in by the Malays. The Uvar drum seems to be fairly late because it is associated with the Ulmark ceremony wherever it is found, and the Ulmark is only partly distributed in the Murngin clans and also seems to be spreading in from the south. It is also not found in the northeastern clans where the hollow-log burial is absent. There are a number of clans farther south than Wessel Island which do not have the Ulmark drum. Of the objects made from a hollow-log form, only one seems comparatively old within Murngin culture. Their comparative recency lends color to the belief that the hollow-log burial is more recent, particularly when one remembers its distribution. This last bit of evidence is obviously insufficient by itself and is merely offered as support for the general thesis of the recency of log burial.

The conclusive proof of this historical induction comes from archaeological finds. Around Arnhem Bay, Buckingham Bay and at Caddell Straits, as well as farther inland, the bones of great numbers of skeletons can be found in the dry rock shelters at the present time. Some of them were collected by the writer. They had been laid out in burial position and some had pieces of bark lying with them. The natives said that they were the bones of very old people who once lived there but who belonged to a different race. Some of them attach the destruction myths to the disappearance of this race whose bones repose in the rock shelters, and others said they were the bones of Wongar people. The bones showed indications of having been covered with red ocher, and the skulls when measured and observed demonstrated that they were authentic remains of Australoid peoples and were undoubtedly racially the same people who occupy the region at the present time. The Murngin knew that these burials were the same as those at Wessel Island, and it was finding the rock burials which brought out the information that Wessel Island people still use this type of interment. With the evidence of a peripheral distribution of rock shelter burials at the present time associated with the findings of rock shelter burials of a former time in the central Murngin area, it seems fairly conclusive proof that the Murngin of the whole area once used the rock shelter method, and that the log coffin interment is more recent than the other.

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342 outer two. They are placed at close intervals to form an almost continuous surface. Long pieces of stringy bark are then bent over the topmost ridgepole and down each side of the roof. On top of this are placed many thicknesses of paper bark, and finally stones and logs to make them fast.

The rafters are fastened to the ridgepoles by tying them with turtle rope and fiber string. They are sometimes made firm by making each with a forked end which is hooked on to the cross-piece, the two being tied together. Bark is used for the walls and sewn on to the edge of the floors and edge of the roof. The walls of the two ends of the house are only half filled in, so that the parts that remain open function as doors. Forked sticks are used as ladders.

[372] Even though this house is used in the hottest part of the year, many small fires are made on the ground beneath it, since it is primarily constructed to keep away mosquitoes which come in countless swarms at this time. The fires are so built that they smoke more than burn. Since the house is on high ground, running water caused by the large floods does not put the fires out.

342 After the rains, when mosquitoes are still bad, the house often consists
●764 of only four piles with flooring. This latter type of structure is also used for platform burial when the corpse is not interred or placed in a tree; such a structure would be specially made for this purpose, and away from the camp.

342 Because this house is far more elaborate than any other type found in
174 northeastern Arnhem Land and has a very restricted distribution, and because of the known constant contact with the Malays who had pile dwellings, there comes a problem of whether it is of native invention or was brought by the Macassars. If one considers only the house itself without its related structures, there is a tendency to believe it comes from outside. This point of view does not orientate the invention to the rest of the material culture.

The essential elements of the mosquito house are: (1) the upright forked pole, and (2) the ridgepole connecting two forked sticks. The forked stick is found all over northern Australia and even southward. Baskets and other articles of the material culture are hung on it. The women use it when soaking the poisonous matter out of cycad palm nuts, and they lean it against the trunks of tall trees they wish to climb. In fact, it has a great variety of uses, and is a constant feature of native camps. The slightly more complex invention of two forked poles with a cross-piece is also found throughout Northern and down into Central Australia. It, too, is a constant feature of native camps and is used as a carryall, if trees are not available from which to hang things. The use of two parallel ridgepoles on four forked sticks as piles is only one step further in the elaboration of the essential idea of forked sticks with connecting ridgepoles. It seems, then, that the idea of a pile house is completely indigenous, although it

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765 [532] A foot below the "eyes" a band a half-inch wide is incised around the cylinder to represent the cicatrice on a native man's or woman's body.

The bones of the dead after exhumation are placed inside the coffin, a hole is dug a foot or so in the ground, and the log placed upright in the hole.

764 [537] *Grave Posts.*—A tree is felled and a log of the appropriate length cut from it. The post may be uncarved or a series of incisions may be made at the top of it to give it the appearance of a carved "head" with one or more necks.

The grave posts are placed over the grave of the dead, or they may be erected in the camp of a mourner to express his feeling of sorrow for the loss of his relation.

Measurements:

Length: adult, four to five feet; child, three and one-half feet.

Diameter: three to six inches.

765 [531] *Bark Coffin.*—The inner bark of a stringy-bark tree is soaked with water and heated over a fire, then formed into a cylinder with the inside of the bark turned out. It is stuffed with grass to keep it in shape and prevent it from splitting. The bones are placed in it and its two edges sewn together with pandanus fiber and a bone awl. The whole surface is covered with red ocher and painted with the totemic design of the deceased. The coffin is two feet long and four or five inches in diameter.

778 *Plank Ranga.*—Floating planks brought in on the tide, possibly from New Guinea, are of special totemic significance, and some of them are made into rangas by painting a design on them. The boards of a modern European box are now sometimes used in the same manner.

292 287 *Bark Belts.*—A strip of stringy bark about two inches in width, with a circumference great enough to reach about the body of a man, is soaked in water and held over a fire to make it pliable and to smooth its surface. It is then bent into its permanent shape and tied around the wearer. The ends are tied with fiber string and the belt is held in place by knotting the strings across the abdomen of the wearer. The belts are painted and used in ceremonies.

765 *Mourning Mast.*—The mast is supposed to represent the one used by the Malay in their sailing vessels when they visited southern Arafura waters.

The mast is made from a long eucalyptus sapling and is about fourteen and a half feet high and three inches in diameter. The tree is barked first and then cut to leave a protruding oblong band around the circumference a third of the way from the top. The band is decorated with the totemic [531] designs of the deceased. Fiber strings are tied to the top of the post and represent mast ropes.

796 *Barnumbir Stick.*—A stick about the length of a spear is cut with a diameter of three-quarters of an inch and is sharpened at one end. It is

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wrapped all over with feathered fiber string. Two feathered strings about eight and one-half feet long, tipped with white cockatoo feathers, are attached to the top of the pole. Cockatoo feathers are also put in bunches at regular three-inch intervals along the pole. 796

The sharpened point is put in the ground while the pole is being used during the morning star (Barnumbir) ceremony.

Paintings.—Bark and rock paintings are made by the Murngin. The inner bark of the eucalyptus is cut and straightened just as it would be to make a house, and the smooth side is used for the drawing. A smooth coating of red ocher is first put over the whole of the surface and various designs then placed on it. They range from purely geometrical drawings to extremely naturalistic ones. These bark drawings are used in the Ulmark ceremony. The favorite animal to depict is the snake, either as Yurlunggur or Muit. Kangaroo tracks and emu tracks are also favorites, as well as fish and emus. All of the geometrical designs are given meaning by the natives. There seems to be only one which has a universal meaning—the diamond-shaped pattern that is always associated with the honeybee. A possible explanation of this is that when the men in the Djungguan lie down in a line on their backs to dance honeybee, one man puts his arms up in back of him. The man behind him places his legs across the first man's arms so that the projecting legs and arms of the two men form a diamond-shaped pattern. All the men in the line do the same thing. Of course it is possible that the idea of the design gave the dancers the form of the dance. 532

The rock paintings are found in the rock shelters where the Murngin sometimes stay. One of the favorite paintings is the human hand. This is made by first covering the palm of a man's hand with red ocher and then pressing it against the rock wall with the fingers spread. The painter then fills his mouth with a white or yellow wash and blows it around the hand to form a white outline around the red palm and fingers. Other drawings are of a totemic nature.

APPENDIX III

MORTUARY CEREMONY AMONG THE WESTERN CLANS OF THE DUA MOIETY

The mortuary cycle of songs used among the clans belonging to the Dua side of the moiety division is the garma variety. The cycle is definite and follows a fairly definite sequence, but the leader can make changes in the general order at his own discretion; he would not, however, violate the 764 533

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764 533 general order of an introduction, main body, and conclusion. The ceremonial leader or head man of the clan leads the mourning song. The following sequence of the cycle is sung:

(1) Stringy bark flower in full blossom.
This song is sung first because this flower, when it opens, has a "stare" about it which, say the natives, is like the glassy look in a man's eyes when he is dying and looking at his spirit.
(2) Stringy-bark tree.
(3) Dua honeybee.
(4) Flying phalanger.
(5) A black and white bird about the size of a mud lark which lives on the plains (gur-bor-duk).
(6) Locust or cicada (rirr-i rirr-i-ka).
"This is the same as the birimbir [spirit] of the dying man."
(7) Rain.
The locust has been listening for the rain to come.
(8) Small flat pebbles (war-ta-pan).
They are moved along by the rain when it strikes the ground.
(9) Stick insect (war-a-la war-a-la).
"This is all the same as the ghost of the dying man."
(10) Rock python (wir-tit).
Sung when the dying man is gasping for breath.
(11) White stone.
Sung when he stops breathing.
(12) Ur-re.
"That spirit is gone and the man is dead."
(13 Bush yam.
"This is the one that ran into the Mirrirmina well when it was profaned by the creator woman's menstruation blood. When you cook that yam, its blood comes out of it just the same as the blood did out of that woman."
(14) Rock python again.
"This means that the snake is taking the spirit into the Mirrirmina well."
(15) Stringy-bark tree.
(16) Rain.
"When Yurlunggur came that time he hit the stringy-bark tree with a stone hatchet and broke it to pieces [lightning]. The pieces flew to the sky and made a noise like the voice of a snake [thunder]. Then this rain came down [spittle of the snake]."
(17) A bird that starts singing when the wet season is coming (cou-cal gur-un-du-la).
"The first rains wet his feathers and he sings out for more rain."

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(18) Mortuary platform (gur-o gur-o ["house of the spirit"]).
(19) Blue-tongued lizard (dja-bak-a-lak).
"He is sung because he goes into the ranga well water."
(20) Finch (djir-kai).
(21) Mirrirmina totem well.
"This is because the spirit of the dead man has now gone inside his totem well."

When a man is considered dead, his relatives start digging a grave for him or preparing a platform for his body some distance from the main camp. While this is being done the sequence of songs is repeated.

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The body is allowed to remain a few months in the grave or on the platform until the flesh is decomposed to a jelly-like substance. The flesh is then taken off the bones. While this is being done a new sequence of songs is sung:

(1) Fresh water pouring from a spring.
(2) Small fresh-water fish.
(3) Sea eagle which catches the fish (dimala).
(4) Pelican.
The pelican is sung because he has a bill which is like a net and catches the fish. "The fish are all the same as the soul of that dead man" (see accounts of the makarata).
(5) A big plain.
"This is all the same as that water which came out of the spring which has come down from the hill country and the bush to the flat sea plain."
(6) Small sea bird which announces the water is near the sea.
(7) Fire to burn off the grass for the dry season.
(8) The darpa snake.
(9) Rain (waltjurn).
(10) Coucal gurundula.
This is a symbol of the wet season.
(11) Crow (wak).
The crow is a symbol of the beginning of the dry season and also of a ghost, "because he tries to pick up the bones of the dead man and he will eat anything." "This means that the people are getting ready to pick up the bones and the body smells."
(12) Small fish.
This is the same song as that sung in the first part of this sequence; at this point paper bark is made ready for taking the bones out of the grave or from the platform. A Yurlunggur

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

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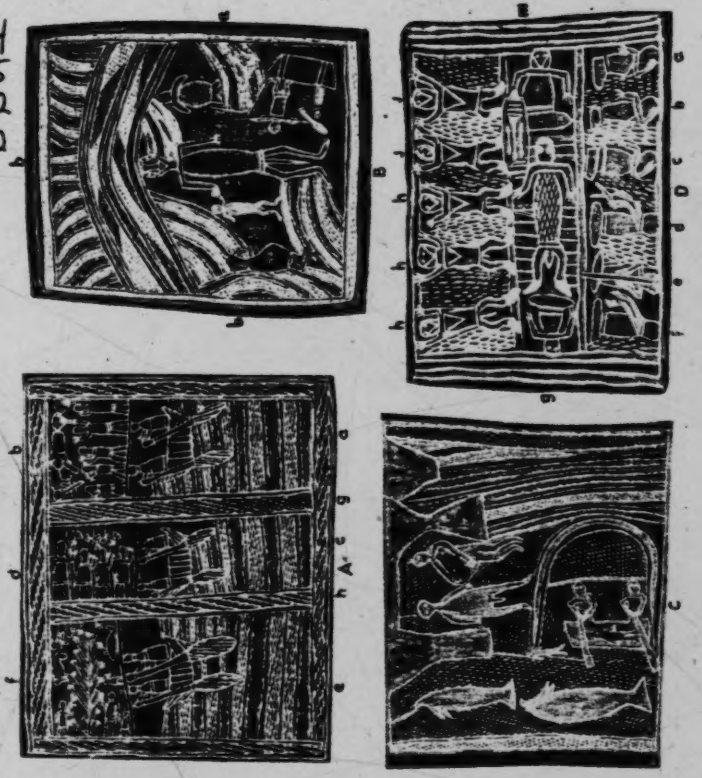

PLATE 90. Bark paintings, Yirrkalla

A The journey of the dua dead
B Dua conception beliefs
C Jirija conception beliefs
D Burial, cleansing the bones

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Oli7 Murngin Oli7

THE ART OF YIRRKALLA

(b) DEATH AND BURIAL

There are three important events in the life of every male aboriginal of Arnhem Land—in fact, in the life of any tribalized Australian aboriginal birth, when he leaves the land of the spirits and enters the every-day world; initiation, when he is admitted into the sacred or ritualistic world, where age makes him increasingly important; and death, when he leaves the every-day world, and again enters into the land of the spirits.

Although there are few rituals associated with birth, those of initiation and the later age-grading ceremonies are long and complicated, for it is by these ceremonies that men are admitted deeper and deeper into the secret life of the tribe.

At death, the burial rituals extend over many weeks, their purpose being not only to send the spirit so happily to its future home that it will not be a danger to the living, but also to allow the living to adjust themselves to their loss.

The burial ceremonies at Yirrkalla have three main phases: (i) the ceremonies at death, (ii) the cleansing of the bones, and (iii) the final burial, after which the spirit of the dead leaves for its aboriginal 'heaven'. If the dead are of the *dua* moiety, the spirit goes to Purelko, and if of the *jurtja*, to Nalkuma.

(i) *The Ceremonies at Death*

When a man dies his relatives gather round the dead body, wailing loudly, the women cutting their scalps with sharpened bones until the blood flows freely. After a short period of wailing the men form a group apart from the women and chant the long series of songs which belong to the totemic group of their dead companion. Next morning the men proceed with the rites of burial, first by rubbing red ochre over the body of the corpse, and on that painting his totemic design.[13] The men also make two bark effigies[14] which they put under the arms of the corpse. They explain to him that the effigies are his children, whom they have killed and placed beside him to prevent him being lonely and wishing to return to haunt the living. The corpse is then wrapped in a thick layer of paper-bark and tied with string.

While all this is being done, other men are erecting a platform of logs about five feet in height and covering it with a layer of leaves. Then, while the men chant another series of totemic songs belonging to the dead man, two aborigines

13. This totemic design is the same as that painted on his body during circumcision. See body paintings associated with circumcision, Pl. 128. Warner (1937), pp. 115-16, in his description and interpretation of the mortuary rituals of the Murngin, an adjacent people, records that the totemic design is painted on the body of the dead man so that the spirits, or *Mokoi*, can identify him.

14. Similar to the bark figures, Fig. 65C, D. Frazer (1936), p. 59, records: 'In Tahiti . . . the priest took a number of small slips of plantain leaf-stalk, fixed two or three pieces under each arm of the corpse, placed a few on the breast, and then, addressing the corpse, said, "There are your family, there is your child, there is your wife, there is your father, and there is your mother. Be satisfied yonder (that is, in the world of the spirits). Look not toward those who are left in this world."'

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

climb to the top of the platform and, taking the corpse from those below, lay it on the bed of leaves,[15] face upwards.

As the two men descend, others blow a wooden trumpet informing the *Mokoi*[16] of the death, knowing that they will take the spirit from the locality for a time so that it will not be a danger to its living relatives. At the same time another man climbs a tall tree and makes a noise like the night-bird, *karawak* (associated with the *Mokoi*).[17] As soon as the aboriginal in the tree hears the *Mokoi* coming (they make a coughing sound) he descends quickly and with the rest of the mourners runs quickly from the burial ground. This is done, not only to make the dead man's spirit go with the *Mokoi*, but because the *Mokoi*, particularly that of the newly dead man, are dangerous to the living.

(ii) *The Cleansing of the Bones*

For the next two or three months no one goes to the burial platform. When, however, putrefaction is complete, the maggots from the body have entered the ground and turned into blowflies, the aborigines meet to perform the second phase in the burial rituals, the cleansing of the bones.[18]

Totemic dances belonging to the clan of the dead man are performed to the accompaniment of much singing, the beating of music sticks and the blowing of the wooden trumpet. The noise of these rituals is supposed to scare the spirit of the dead man and his ghostly attendants, the *Mokoi*, from the burial platform. The body is lifted from the platform or, if an earth burial, exhumed and a curious ritual performed over it, in which two men sit, one on either side of the corpse, whilst a third thrusts a spear into it, saying that he has speared a turtle.[19] The women, who have been sitting at one side, then come forward, take the skeleton apart, wash the bones in water and wrap them in paper-bark to remove the smell. At the end of three days the women unwrap the bones, rub them with red ochre and place them in a temporary bark coffin, on the outside of which the men have painted the totemic symbols of the deceased.[20]

15. If when a man dies there are only a few people present, the corpse is wrapped in paper bark and buried in the ground.

16. The *Mokoi (jirittja)* and *Buan (dua)* are spirits living in the jungle, who are always seeking souls of the newly-dead for company. A dead person has two spirits, one, *wakinu*, which finally goes to a distant 'heaven' (p. 326) and one which stays on earth. The latter are the *Mokoi*. (See Warner (1937), p. 116; also p. 338.) There are, however, many kinds of *Mokoi*, and our information about them is very limited.

17. See ceremonial staff of *karawak*, Pl. 131E.

18. See description of bark coffins, p. 317.

19. The significance of this ritual is obscure. Warner (1937), p. 113, refers to it. A similar ritual is supposed to be carried out at Purelko, the final resting place of the *dua* dead, p. 325.

20. Frazer (1936), p. 5, mentions that, 'In Misol, a small island to the north-west of New Guinea, . . . the body, wrapped in clothes, is deposited on a scaffold built for it in the forest. From time to time the relations come to inspect the corpse until decomposition is complete. The skeleton is then brought to the place, generally a cave, where the bones of all the dead inhabitants of the village are collected.' This is a similar burial custom to that carried out by the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land and might well be the source from which the Arnhem Land custom originated.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Ol17 Muragin Ol17

The skull,[21] which also has been painted with its totemic design, is placed in a string carrying-bag. Both the skull and the bark coffin containing the bones are carried from one camp to another by a near female relative of the dead man and suitably mourned over, so that the dead spirit will be happy. At night the bark coffin is placed on a pair of forked sticks, and the skull, in its carrying-bag, hung on a nearby tree.

(iii) *The Final Burial*

At the end of some months, after the old men have decided that the time is ripe for the final disposal of the bones, the brothers of the dead man cut down a hollow tree to make a log coffin and, after taking off the bark, paint on it the totemic design of the dead man.[22]

While the bones are being transferred from the bark to the log coffin the men perform the water dance. A tribal sister then digs a hole in the ground, the log coffin is placed in the hole in an upright position,[23] the earth packed tightly round the base, and the burial rituals are over. Sometimes the small bones of the hands and feet are given to near relatives as mementoes. The skull, being too large to go in the log coffin, is usually broken up and thrown away.

Four bark paintings illustrate the burial rituals: Pl. 100A, the ceremonies at death; Pl. 99D, the cleansing of the bones and the placing in the bark coffin; Pl. 100B, the transference of the bones to the log coffin; and Pl. 101D, a complete sequence of burial.

On Pl. 100A, panel *a*, a newly deceased man is surrounded by mourning women. On panel *b*, the dead man is in his grave (this is an earth burial). On the lower edge of the painting three men are beating their music sticks together and singing, accompanied by a fourth, blowing his drone tube.[24] Above the grave are four dancing women and, on panel *c*, another line of women singing and dancing. The remainder of the painting deals with the journey of the spirit to Nalkuna, the *jiritja* heaven. This will be described later, p. 329.

Plate 99D pictures a ceremony associated with the second phase of the burial ceremonies of a *dua* man, the cleansing of the bones.

In the centre of the painting is the desiccated body resting on the burial platform (short lines on either side). At *a* his mother, *b* his sister, *c* his wife, are stabbing themselves in the scalp with a bone specially sharpened for the occasion. The blood flowing from each woman is indicated by the adjacent cross-hatching. At *d* and *f*, two *dua* men are beating their music sticks and chanting the burial songs, and at *e* a *jiritja* man is blowing the drone tube.

21. See painted skull, Pl. 101C, E.
22. This design is the same as that painted on the body of the dead man throughout his life.
23. See Milingimbi log coffin, Pl. 105A. Those used at Yirrkalla were longer, simpler and without projecting spikes on top.
24. This is a hollow stick, or sometimes a length of bamboo, about two inches in diameter and up to five feet in length, which is blown like a trumpet. Some investigators call them by the European name of didjeridoo.

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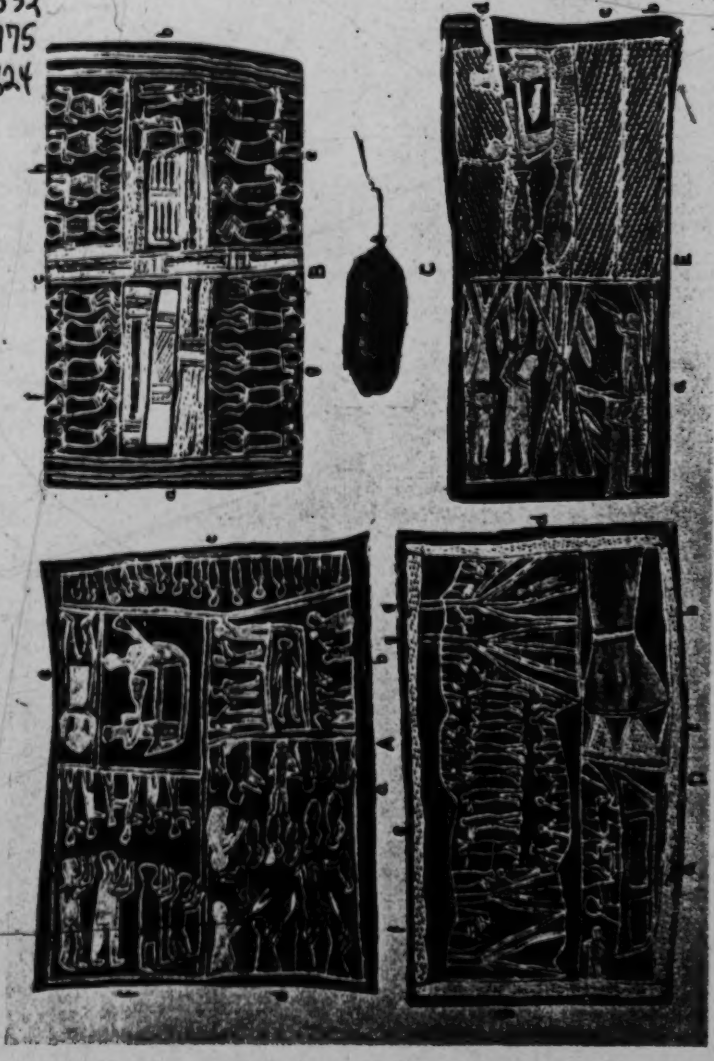

PLATE 100. Bark paintings, Yirrkalla

A, E. Journey of jirija dead B. Final stage of burial C. Bean of menin vine
D. Jirija heaven, Nalkuma

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Oil7 Muragin Oil7

Three *dua* men, *h*, *h*, *h*, and two *jiritja* men, *j*, *j*, are performing the totemic dances of the dead man, the cross-hatching between the figures symbolizing the dust rising from under their feet. At *g* is a *dua* woman ready to take the skeleton apart, and at *m* a *jiritja* woman waiting with the bark coffin.

Plate 100B deals with the third and final stage of burial, the transference of the bones from the bark to the log coffin.[25] In panel *a* there are two *dua* log coffins and one *jiritja*, the *jiritja* being in the middle. In the left of panel *b* are two bark coffins, the left-hand one containing the bones of a *jiritja* man and the right-hand one the bones of a *dua* man.[26] The cross-hatched panels on both sides of the coffins are the forked sticks of the burial platform, and the vertical panel *c* the framework. The various performers in the ceremony are depicted in panels *d*, *e*, *f* and *g*, each group holding their hands and arms in a manner peculiar to their moiety and sex.

Thus, in panel *e* the *jiritja* women are dancing with their hands held at waist level, and on panel *f*, the *dua* women, with their knuckles held tightly against their heads. On panel *g*, the *dua* men are holding both hands above their heads, and at *d* the *jiritja* men have one hand held high and the other at waist level. In the right of panel *b*, two men are providing music for the dancers, the *jiritja* (right) blowing the drone tube and the *dua* (left) singing and beating his music sticks.

Plate 101D is divided into seven panels, each picturing some phase of the second, third or fourth stages of the ceremonies.

In panel *a* (lower right), the dead man, the central figure, is being lifted from the burial platform by four aborigines, two on each side. The small figure at the feet of the corpse represents one of the wives whose duty it is to clean the bones. In the next panel, *b*, one man is blowing the drone tube, and to the right of him another is singing and beating his music sticks together. The central figure of this panel is a woman wrapping the bones in paper-bark to remove the smell before they are placed in the temporary bark coffin. The four figures on the right are women performing the burial dance. On panel *c* (lower left) are six more dancing women.

The upper left panel, *d*, shows the bones, now encased in the temporary bark coffin, being passed to the mother, or the wife, of the deceased (central position). On the lower edge of the same panel, reading from the left, is a drone-tube player, one man beating his music sticks and singing and five women dancing. The two lines of men on the upper edge are performing a totemic dance at the same time as the bark coffin is being handed to the woman. The remaining panels depict the final disposal of the bones in the log coffin. In *e* are seven men and the log coffin containing the bones, whilst in panel *f* the women are dancing. Some men are playing the drone tube in panel *g*, others are beating the music

25. See bark coffin, Yirrkalla, Pl. 102C, D, and Milingimbi, Pl. 103B, C.
26. This painting suggests that on some occasions the bones of the members of both moieties are transferred to their respective log coffins at the same time.

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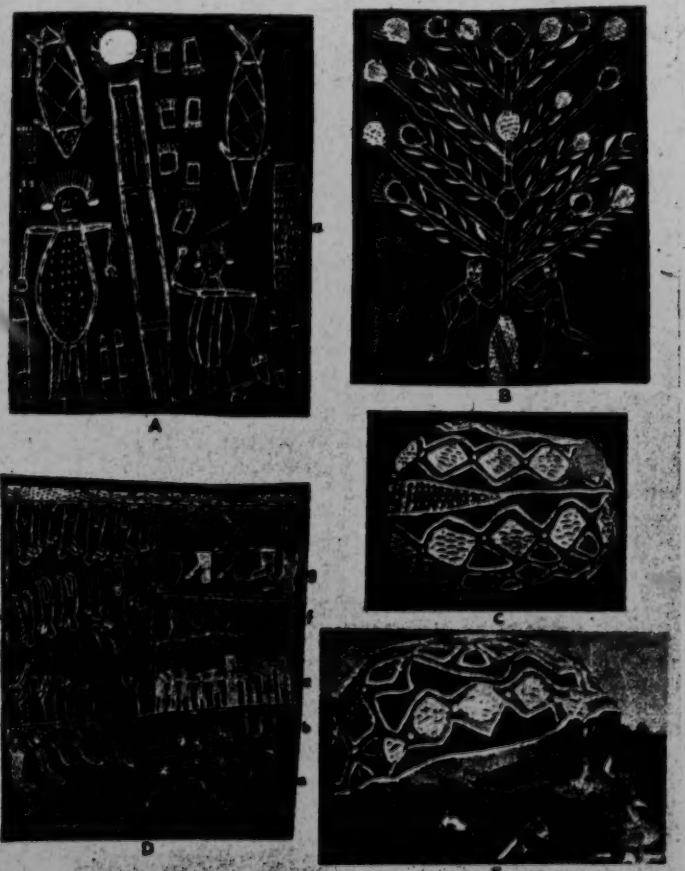

PLATE 101. Bark paintings and painted skull, Yirrkalla

A The dua journey of the dead
B The flight of the morning star
C, E A painted skull
D A burial ceremony

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Oil7 Muragin Oil7

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sticks and singing the burial songs. The cross-hatched areas throughout the painting symbolize the dust rising from the feet of the dancers.

Plate 101C, E pictures the painted skull of a *jiritja* woman of the honey bee totem of the *dalwongu mata*[27] of Blue Mud Bay.

On Plate 101C the central dotted triangular design is the bee-bread, and the transverse lines across it, the young bees. The diamond shapes, covering the whole skull, represent the comb filled with honey, and the surrounding white lines, the wax.

(iv) *Coffins*

The aborigines of Yirrkalla use two kinds of coffins: log coffins, in which the bones are finally deposited, and temporary bark coffins, in which the wife or mother carries the bones from camp to camp.

I saw several log coffins at Yirrkalla. They were placed vertically in the ground and stood up to seven feet in height. Although some had rings cut round their circumference, all evidence of painted decoration had been washed away by the elements.

However, my informants made me seven replicas of the temporary bark coffins. These coffins belonged to individuals of five totems: *Tjambuwal*, the thunder-man; *garinu*, the green turtle; *kapu*, the water totem; *tungaldji*, the brolga; and *kunduru*, the serpent.

[82]

Warner[28] describes how, when the log is being prepared and painted as a coffin, it is treated in a similar manner to a totemic emblem. It is kept in a special place and, while being painted, is chanted over by men singing a cycle of songs belonging to the moiety of the dead men.

Tjambuwal, the Thunder-man

Plate 102A, B is the design painted on a temporary bark coffin of a man who was a member of the totems of *Tjambuwal*, the thunder-man, *tjunda*, the lizard, and *buorta*, the water-bird.

The three top centre panels on A refer to the *Tjambuwal* myth. In the centre is *Tjambuwal* with splashes of his urine rising into the sky and forming clouds. The clouds, *wulmu* (curious loops of clouds, which the natives pointed out to me), occupy the panels on either side of *Tjambuwal*. The outer upper panels deal with the bird, *buorta*, whose tracks are indicated in one group of diagonal lines, and the seeds of the swamp grass on which *buorta* feeds are shown as dots in the adjacent group. The cross-hatching between these lines represent the leaves of the swamp grass.[29]

The designs in the four lower panels all refer to the lizard, *tjunda*, at Port Bradshaw. In these panels the artist has painted the traditional designs of the

27. This is the *mata* design of the *dalwongu* language group. Fig. 64J.
28. Warner (1937), p. 441.
29. These designs are almost identical with those on the music stick of *Djunkgau*. Pl. 132F, F.

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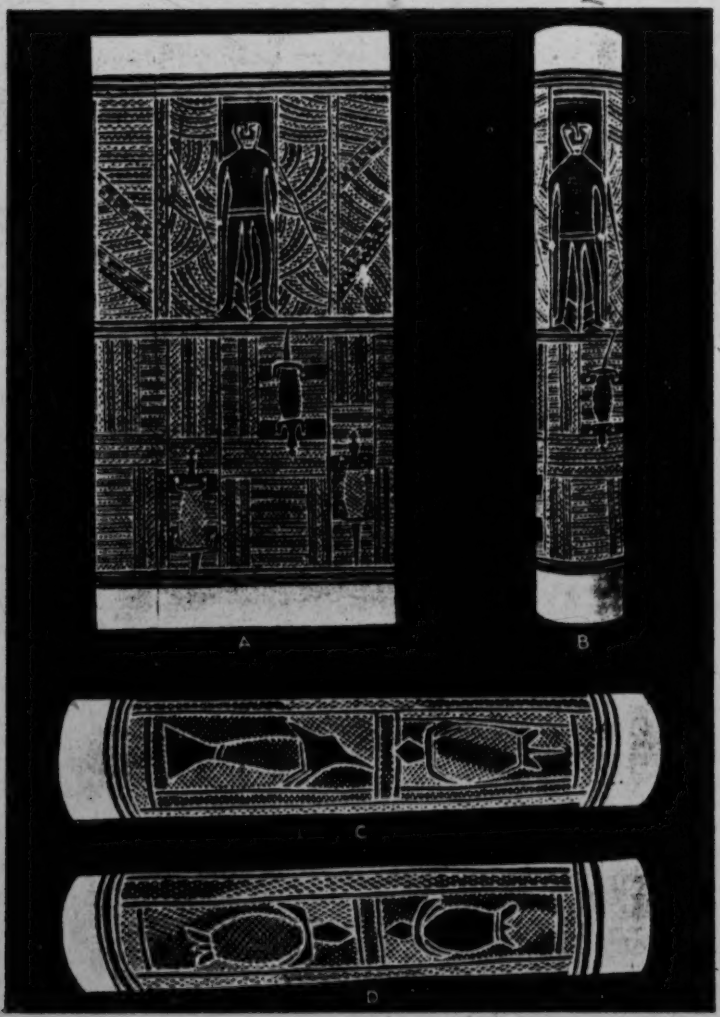

Betty Hunter

PLATE 102. Coffins, Yirrkalla and Milingimbi

A, B The thunder-man, Tjambuwal C, D The green turtle, gariwa

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

parallel sand-hills and the lizard walking on the soft sand, as they were seen and 'sung' by *Djunkgao* at Port Bradshaw.[30] On the lower left-hand panel the lines of cross-hatching symbolize the light on the crest of the breaking waves, seen by *Djunkgao* as he landed on the beach at Bilapinja Island.[31]

The Green Turtle, Gariwa

Plate 102C, D pictures the coffin of a man belonging to the totem of the mythical green turtle, *gariwa* (*Chelonia mydas*), whose totemic place is on the floor of the sea between Yirrkalla and Bremer Island.[32] On one side of the coffin, Pl. 102D, are two green turtles, *gariwa*, and on the other, Pl. 102C, in the left-hand panel, is a dolphin, and in the right an unidentified turtle, *jurnungi*. The cross-hatched band between them is the totemic rock at the bottom of the sea and the surrounding cross-hatching, the ocean.

The Water Totem, Kapu

These two coffins belonged to *dua* men of the *kapu*, water, totemic place near Blue Mud Bay, where three fresh-water streams run into the Koolatong River.[33] One, Pl. 103C, appears to belong to the fresh-water side, and the other, Pl. 101B, to the salt-water side of the totemic locality.

The transverse bands encircling the coffin, Pl. 103C, are the three water-courses mentioned in the myth. The lower cross-hatched vertical panels represent the 'new' water, i.e. the fresh water which flows into the river after the heavy rains. The lines of dots on the upper section of the coffin are frog's eggs, the cross-hatched areas between, running water, and the short transverse lines at *a*, logs lying in the bed of the streams.

On Pl. 101B the lines of rectangles[34] represent the waters of the sea, and the groups of lines encircling the coffin, ridges of sand left by the receding tide.

The Brolga, Tungaldji

When the brolgas (*Grus rubicundus*) were men, during creation times, they used to walk between the Meilinourit waterholes in the extensive swamp country of Diaunjarl, Blue Mud Bay.

Later these men transformed themselves into brolgas, which still live in considerable numbers in that locality.

Plate 104D is the painted design on a bark coffin belonging to a man of the *tungaldji*, brolga, totem. The circular designs are the Meilinourit waterholes. Paper-bark trees, *mamburu*, now grow in the swamps. The radiating paths are those made by the brolga men as they travelled from one waterhole to the other in search of food.

30. Bark painting, Pl. 86A; myth, p. 273. 31. Bark painting, Pl. 85F; myth, p. 271.
32. See carved figure of green turtle, Pl. 111A, B; myth, p. 447.
33. Map, Fig. 57.
34. This is the *mata* design of the *djapu* language group, Fig. 64A.

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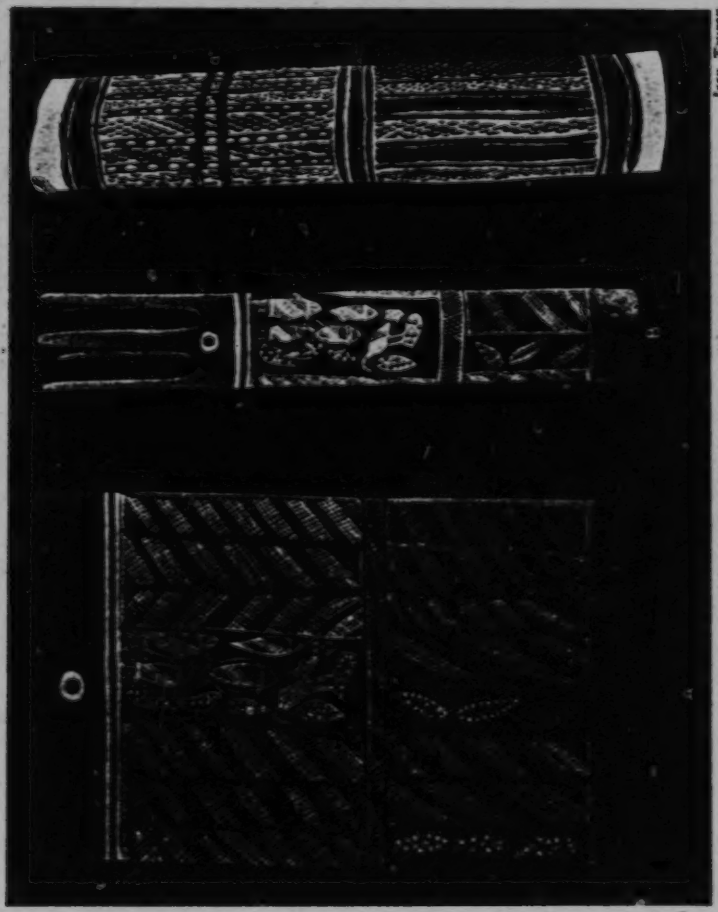

Jean Thomas

PLATE 103. Coffins, Yirrkalla and Milingimbi
A, B Unidentified C Water; kapu

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THE ART OF ARNHEM LAND

The Serpent, Kunduru[35]

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Two temporary bark coffins belonging to a man of the *kunduru*, snake, totem were made and painted by the same artist. Though the designs on the two coffins are similar in appearance, they relate to different parts of the same myth.

During creation times there were a number of mythical *kunduru* snakes in north-eastern Arnhem Land. One *kunduru* lived in the mangrove swamps at a place called Baimaruma, south of Millingimbi. Whilst there, he swallowed two women and a child.[36] Later, when the *kunduru* moved his camp to Tunlki, at Arnhem Bay, he vomited up the dead people. Two other mythical *kunduru* (Pl. 104A) made their camp at Karumi, in the forest country near Arnhem Bay. They were quiet people and did not interfere with anyone. The Millingimbi *kunduru* lived at Tunlki for some time before he invited the two *kunduru* at Karumi, who were then man and wife, to stay with him. When they agreed to do so, they all changed themselves into the present-day harmless python of that name which lives among the rocks.

The coffin designs on Pl. 104C deal with the Millingimbi *kunduru* snakes which moved to Tunlki, a mangrove swamp at Arnhem Bay. The transverse panel, *a*, is a fresh-water stream. When the tide is out, this stream flows down the central watercourse *c*, filling the swamps, panels *d* and *e*, with fresh water. At high tide the water flows from the sea, panel *f*, along watercourse *c*, in the opposite direction, replacing the fresh water in the swamps with salt water. The painting on the coffin shows two *kunduru* in each swamp. The design at the head of the snake on panel *e* is their camp.

Plate 104A, although similar in design to C, deals with the section of the myth in which two *kunduru* snakes camped in the forest country at Karumi, Arnhem Bay. In panel *a* are two of the *kunduru* snakes, the crescent at the head of the one on the left representing their dry-season camp. The transverse lines of cross-hatching on panels *a* and *b* are symbolical of the ribs of the snakes.[37]

Whilst engaged on archaeological research at Millingimbi, F. M. Setzler and F. D. McCarthy collected three log coffins, together with a simple interpretation of the designs.

Fresh-water Tortoise, Mimalu

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Plate 105A, B belongs to a man of the *mimalu*, fresh-water tortoise, totemic group. The main figure is the fresh-water tortoise.[38] The pear-shaped designs near the head and on the right are fresh-water snakes, called *tjiluing*. The holes cut through the upper end of the coffin are the 'eyes' of the coffin.[39] In these the mourners sometimes place the long leg bones of the dead man. The prongs

[71]

33. The snake, *kunduru*, is also known by the aborigines of Goose Islands, Pl. 25F.
36. This bears some resemblance to the myth of the *julunggur* serpent which swallowed the *Wawalik* sisters, p. 278; Warner (1937), p. 250.
37. The convention of showing the ribs of snakes external to the body, a simple form of X-ray art, is not unusual. See Pl. 71 and Fig. 5 from Central Australia.
38. See bark painting, Pl. 120A, and engraved pipe, Fig. 50D, belonging to *mimalu*.
39. Warner (1937), p. 411.

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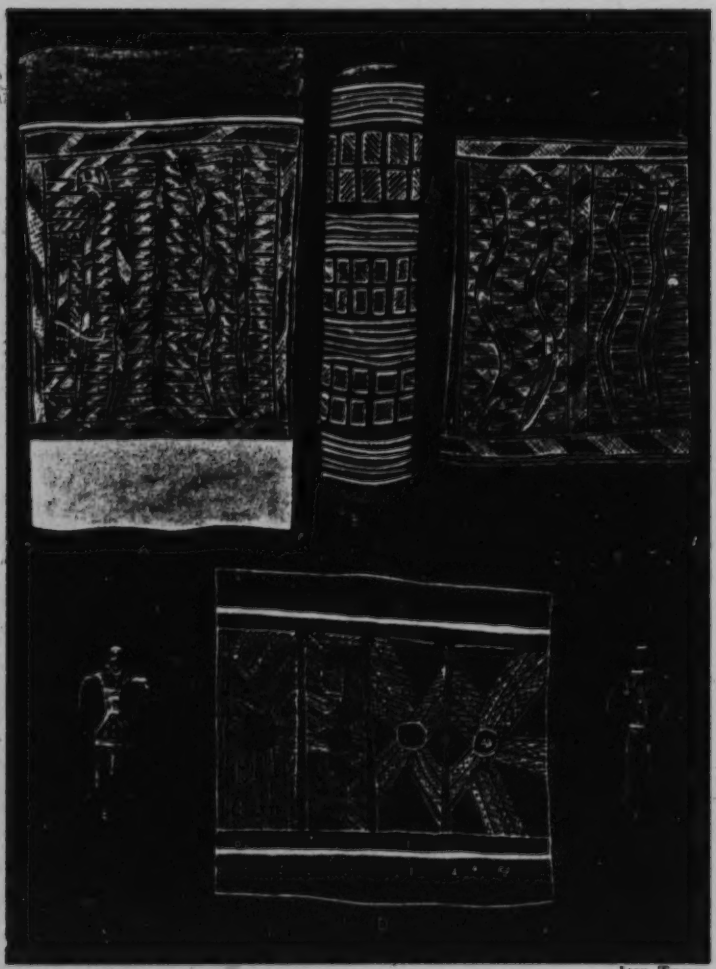

Jean Truran

PLATE 104. Coffins and wax figures, Yirrkalla

A, C The snake, kundura B Water, kapu D The brolga, tungaldji
E, F Oijal and Neri-neri

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OK17 Muragin OK17

represent the mouth and teeth of an unknown mythical monster. There was no explanation for the fish designs on the lower right.

Fresh-water Fish, Kuiwarina

Plate 105C, D belongs to a member of the fresh-water fish, *kuiwarina*, totem of the *dua* moiety, whose totemic place is on the Glyde River. The more or less triangular designs, upper left, represent huts, called *ambit*, and the oval designs on the other panels, women's carrying-baskets. The dots on the edge of the baskets symbolize the mythical fresh-water fish, *kuiwarina*, and the cross-hatching inside, smaller fish. As in A, the holes are the 'eyes' of the coffin, and the prongs the teeth and jaws of some unidentified monster.

Unidentified Totem

Plate 103A, B is a coffin of an unidentified totem from Milingimbi. In the upper central panel, A, the bird is an emu, and the pear-shaped designs, yams. Three large fresh-water fish occupy the upper right. Below them is a cat-fish, *kingding* (distinguished by the tentacles from the mouth and the lack of fins), and near the head of the cat-fish, a diamond fish. Three king-fish, *jungala*, are shown in the lower left panel, and three cat-fish, *kingding*, in the lower central panel.

(c) THE JOURNEY OF THE DEAD SPIRIT AND ITS AFTER-LIFE

When the log coffin has been placed in its final position and the people have returned to their camps, the spirits of the dead leave their bones, and according to their moiety, travel to their respective 'heaven'. In these 'heavens' there is always pleasant weather and ample food. Everyone is happy, because each spirit on its arrival, whatever its previous disposition, is changed into a person of equable temperament and good health. All day long the spirits may bask in the sun, talking to old friends about their mutual experiences when on earth together, and every evening they perform their favourite ceremonies and sing their favourite songs. Many of the spirit people, however, amuse themselves by going out in their canoes to hunt the sea-creatures for food.[40]

Although the *dua* and *jiritja* myths of the journey of the spirit to the land of the dead have many points of resemblance, the destinations are different, the *dua* spirits travelling east to Purelko,[41] an island near the sunrise, and the *jiritja* to Nalkuma,[42] a land to the north, where in addition to the usual

40. See *dua* myths, *Turi-turi*, p. 329, and *Balu balu*, p. 152; also *jiritja* myth of *Kultana*, p. 329, the *Mokoi* and the dugongs, p. 345.

41. Warner (1937), p. 321, tells an interesting myth of the journey of a mortal man to Purelko.

42. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 51, record that Badu (Mulgrave Island in the Torres Straits) is the *jiritja* home of the dead. My Yirrkalla *jiritja* informants said that Nalkuma, their 'heaven', is to the north. It would appear, however, from the myth associated with the carved figure of *Jindjaiani* (Pl. 139), 8), p. 411, that the *jiritja* groups at Arnhem Bay have a different 'heaven' from that of the aborigines of Yirrkalla.

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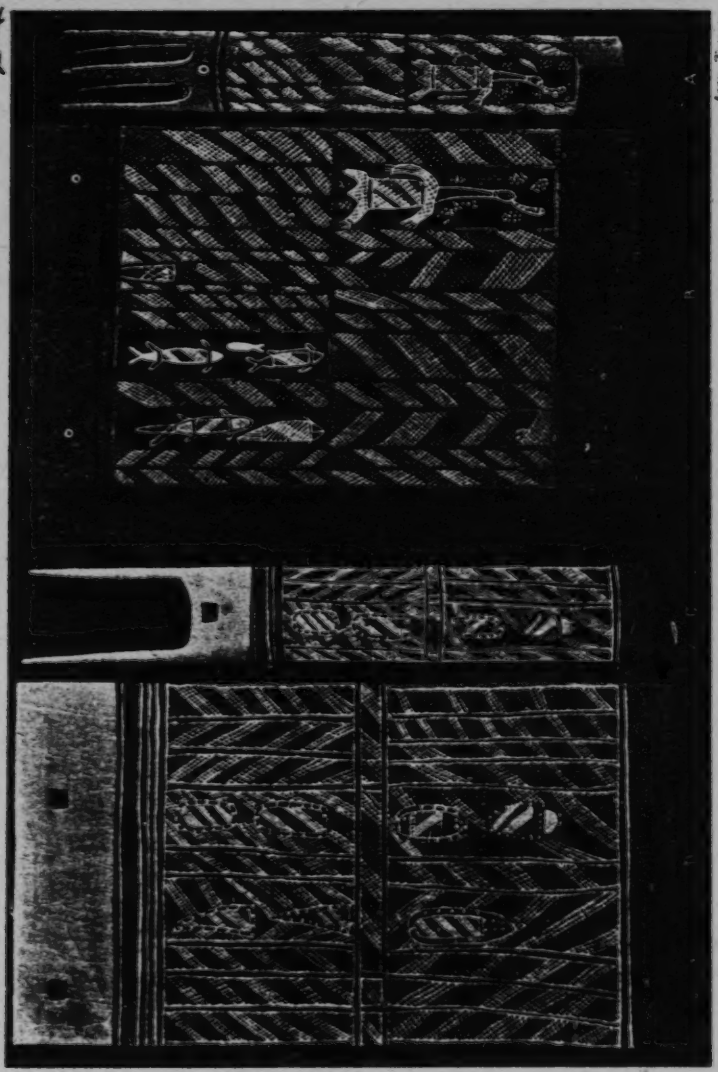

from Tjurunga

PLATE 105. Coffins, Milingimbi

A, B. The tortoise, minala C, D. The fresh-water fish, kulwarina

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

after another. At first the spears penetrate deeply into his flesh, but after a while it becomes so hard and tough that the spears cannot even pierce the skin.[17] While this is going on, the women sit on the ground and wail in sympathy for the sufferings of the new spirit.

This ordeal over, the men of Purelko take the new spirit to their camp, tell him that he has passed his initiation, teach him many new songs and dances and invite him to join in their ceremonies.

The method of entry of the spirit of a woman is somewhat different. When the masked plover, *berrk-berrk*, announces the arrival of a new spirit and the head man, *Jaualin-wuru*, finds out that it is a woman, he sends a small child along the track which leads from the beach to Purelko, telling it to find its mother and bring her to him. *Jaualin-wuru* always camps on that track so that no one can reach Purelko without being properly prepared. After *Jaualin-wuru* has met the new arrival and, if necessary, transformed her into a young woman in good health, she stays in his camp until she is pregnant. She is then admitted to Purelko where, after a short and painless period of gestation, she gives birth to her child. The idea behind this belief is that a woman, who must be perfect to enter Purelko, has to show that she is capable of bearing a child.

Two women, *Dunjun-jina* and *Mitjuna*, live at Purelko and keep the morning star, *barnumbir*, in a string bag, guarding it jealously all the day and most of the night, lest it should escape. A little before dawn, *Jaualin-wuru*, the head man of Purelko, says to the women: 'It's time that you let the morning star out of that bag so that it can visit the *dua* camps on earth both to wake up the men, women and children and to give them the messages from the dead.'

The woman *Mitjuna* objects strongly to this suggestion, because she is afraid that she might lose *barnumbir*, but *Jaualin-wuru* overrules her, and releases the morning star, which is already struggling to get out of the bag to perform its allotted tasks.[18] At first *barnumbir* rests on the top of a tall pandanus tree from which it can see a long distance. This causes the women to cry out in fear that they might lose the star, and to ask that it be returned to them. To pacify the women *Jaualin-wuru* pulls the morning star back again, it is on a string—and puts it in the bag. But, though the women are pleased, *Jaualin-wuru* thinks of the aborigines on earth waiting for their messages. So he opens the bag again and allows *barnumbir* to escape. For a while the morning star dances along the surface of the water, but soon climbs rapidly into the sky. It visits each *dua* place in turn,[19] wakes the aborigines and then gives them messages from their relatives and friends at Purelko. Just as dawn is breaking *Jaualin-wuru* takes hold of the

17. The body is speared when it is taken from the burial platform, p. 312. Warner (1937), p. 413, refers to the same practice. All the male spirits have to pass through this initiation ritual at Purelko. There are different rituals for the women, p. 328. There are no such ordeals in the *pitpa* heaven, Nalkuna.

18. The *dua* moiety of Milingimbi have a similar belief. Myth, p. 328.

19. See p. 327 for the list of *dua* localities.

31 Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Murngin OII7

5

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

The DECORATED PICTURES and objects collected in Arnhem Land can be grouped in four classes: Human and animal figures, carved in wood, modelled in wax or made from bark, belonging to both north-eastern Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt; the human penis; carved and painted ceremonial objects associated with ancestral beings and totemic groups of western Arnhem Land; and decorated implements and weapons.

Human and Animal Figures. It has been known for many years that the aborigines of Australia, and especially of Arnhem Land, produced carved representations of men and women in wood. Warner,[1] during 1926-9, saw at Milingimbi mortuary posts four to five feet long, erected over the graves of the dead, on which 'a series of incisions may be made at the top . . . to give it the appearance of a carved "head" with one or more necks.' Worms,[2] in 1912, records carved human figures used in the Goramara ceremony of the Kimberley regions of north-western Australia. In 1946,[3] and again in 1949,[4] the Berndts described wooden figures from Yirrkalla in north-eastern Arnhem Land, and in 1953 Mountford[5] records a wooden figure from the Durack Ranges of north-western Australia.* The aborigines of Yirrkalla also make human figures in bark and wax. Worms[6] illustrates similar bark figures used in the Goramara ceremony, and McConnel[7] a figure in wax from Cape York, Queensland. During the expedition's stay at Yirrkalla, I collected a number of human figures made in wood, wax and bark.

Animal figures carved in the round have been found over a much wider area than have the human figures. Spencer[8] illustrates a carved turtle and a fish from Oenpelli. There is also in the South Australian Museum collection a carved crocodile from Cape York, a dugong from Melville Island, fish from both Elcho and Goulburn Islands, and carved reptiles and animals from the Nullarbor Plains of South Australia. Further research will, no doubt, show a much more extensive distribution of this type of handicraft than the present evidence indicates.

The Human Penis. A number of specimens of the human penis, in stone and wood, have been collected both in central and north-western Australia and in Arnhem Land. Campbell[9] illustrates two penes carved in stone and one in wood from north-western Australia; Mountford[10] figures two stone sub-incised penes from the same area, as well as a stone circumcised penis and a ceremonial knife

1. Warner (1937), p. 504.
2. Worms (1912), Pls. 1, 7.
3. Berndts (1946), Pls. 1-2.
4. Berndts (1949), Pls. 1-3.
5. Mountford (1954), Pl. 1, Figs. 6 - 10.

* Since going to press, Mountford has seen the aborigines of Melville Island carving human figures in the round.

6. Worms (1912), Pl. 6.
7. McConnel (1953), Pl. XVII, Fig. 1.
8. Spencer (1928), Pl. XVI.
9. Campbell (1921), p. 145.
10. Mountford (1938b), Pl. 8, Figs. 1, 3, 4-6, 7.

[P. 414 contains no text]

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

*532 171 from Central Australia. Balfour[11] also figures a stone penis which is linked with the myth of the rain-man from Korporilja, near Hermannsburg, Central Australia.[12]

W. E. Harney, whilst with the expedition, found a carved wooden penis associated with a mythical man, *Borolo-borolo*, set up in the middle of a saline flat.[13]

The examples of the human penis, particularly those carved in stone, exhibit a remarkable skill in the shaping of this hard material. They constitute an ethnological problem in a continent where the working of stone has not reached a high level.

Carved and Painted Ceremonial Objects. Whilst the expedition was at Oenpelli the aborigines brought in a number of sacred objects, most of them from the Liverpool River area, belonging to mythical creatures and their increase ceremonies. Spencer[14] illustrates a number of these objects.

[411] *Decorated Implements and Weapons.* Although the shield and the boomerang (two objects which aborigines in other parts of Australia spend much time decorating) are not used in Arnhem Land, many of the paddles and spear-throwers are painted with designs which, almost without exception, refer to some myth. The aborigines also engrave designs on their long smoking pipes.

1. HUMAN FIGURES IN WOOD AND THEIR CEREMONIAL OBJECTS. YIRRKALLA

*532 177 *Human Figures carved in wood.* At Yirrkalla I collected nine full-length wooden human figures and eight heads, all of which represented either mythological or spirit people.

Origin. Inquiries about the carved human figures of north-eastern Arnhem Land proved that they are of comparatively recent origin.

Maunulun,[15] an aboriginal about fifty years of age, remembers, when he was a small boy, seeing an old Macassan trepanger, *Bopalindi*, show his father, [764] *Duankin*, how to carve a human head on the top of a burial post. This post *Bopalindi* later placed as a memorial on the grave of a dead Macassan.[16] *Duankin* spent much time carving a similar post, which he took to the Macassan for criticism. *Bopalindi*, when congratulating the old man on his effort, suggested that the aborigines, like the people of his own country, should place similar posts on the graves of their dead so that they would not be forgotten so quickly.

Duankin taught his son, *Maunulun*, the art of carving the mortuary posts,[17] he in turn passing the knowledge to others. As the aboriginal craftsmen became

11. Balfour (1951), p. 246.

12. I have not personally examined this specimen but from the illustration it appears to be a natural stone, bearing a remarkable resemblance to a penis. Mountford (1939a), Pl. 8, Fig. C, illustrates a similar example.

13. Pl. 116B; myth, p. 311. 14. Spencer (1928), Figs. 542, 543, Pl. XVI.

[115] 15. *Maunulun*, one of my best informants (Pl. 4A) carved many of these wooden figures for me. He died the same day Mr and Mrs Berndt.

16. Berndts (1949) describe a Macassan burial. 17. See example, Pl. 136C.

3: Mountford E-S (1948) 1956 OII7 Muragin OII7

more expert they experimented with the carved figures until at the present time they are able to produce a creditable representation of the human form (see Pl. 135.A, B).

From that time until comparatively recently the *jiritja*[18] men adopted the Macassan custom of using carved grave posts, but only when the body was buried instead of being placed on a platform. When a *jiritja* man died, his moiety asked a *dua* man to carve a mortuary post to place on the grave.[19] Later, when the body was disinterred and the burial dances were being performed a *jiritja* man, taking the mortuary post with him, went from camp to camp collecting food for the participants in the burial rituals.[20] At the completion of the meal the post was replaced on the empty grave.

The chief interest of the carved human figures lies in the fact that in a little over two generations the aborigines, without the help and for most of the time without even the knowledge of the white man, have taken a simple post figure of foreign origin and through improvement of techniques can now carve in wood heads and full-length human figures of considerable merit.

The Rev. F. W. Chaseling, when a missionary at Yirrkalla, was the first to discover that the aborigines of that locality were carving the human figure in the round. This discovery came about in a curious manner. When King George V died, Chaseling, in one of his sermons, expressed grief at the great loss the nation had suffered. This sermon and the concern of the missionary over the loss of his king so impressed *Maunualan* that he carved a mortuary post,[21] similar to those used on the *jiritja* graves, but which was supposed to resemble the King. This post *Maunualan* presented to the missionary so that he would be reminded of his dead monarch. Chaseling, in 1938, realizing the importance of his discovery, presented the mortuary post to the Australian Museum, Sydney. Unfortunately the Museum authorities, unaware that the post was a unique example of aboriginal handicraft, did not describe it in a scientific journal.

I was able to examine this figure early in 1949. It was the head of a bearded man (Pl. 138C, D) cut on the end of a hardwood post about four feet long and five inches in diameter. The face, about five inches long, consisted of eyes, a nose, lips and ears; the ears, however, being somewhat out of position.[22] The body of the pole is decorated with ceremonial string.

I also collected at Yirrkalla a number of human heads carved in wood, most of them representing spirit people or *Mokoi* who live in the surrounding jungles and eucalyptus forests.

18. This was because the aborigines made *Bopalindi* a member of the *jiritja* moiety.
19. According to Warner ((1937), p. 434, at Milingimbi burial posts are placed on the graves.
20. Warner (1937), p. 433, describes this food-collecting ritual at Milingimbi, and the Berndts (1949), p. 216, at Yirrkalla.
21. Warner (1937), p. 501, refers to a burial post being erected on the aboriginal graves at Milingimbi. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 48, record the finding of a burial post figure at the same locality.
22. I am indebted to the Australian Museum, Sydney, for the photograph of this specimen, E.46535, and the relevant details.

The cross-hatching on the back and front of the figure indicates the tunic worn by the woman and the pattern on the legs, the stripes on her short trousers. The central disc is a money bag, held in place by the diagonal strings. The artist has indicated *Jubara's* long hair by a series of vertical lines.

The Wuruma Man

Plate 136C illustrates a mortuary post, called *wuruma*, which, according to my informants, is similar to those the visiting Macassan trepangers placed on the graves of their dead.[69] Until recently men of the *jiritja* moiety placed similar posts on the graves of their dead. Both Warner and the Berndts[70] describe some of the customs associated with their use.

The Woman, Wurati-laku

A mythical woman, *Wurati-laku*, who once lived on the Amakula River, Groote Eylandt,[71] became dissatisfied with her surroundings and started on a journey round the island. She camped at many places, at the Angoroko River, at Amalipa, at north-western Groote Eylandt, at Wangu-garipa, near Winlaykumba, at Algirita, Lake Hubert, making her final camp at Natira, near Central Hill. Each of her camps became extensive outcrops of rocky boulders. *Wuratilaku*, afraid lest men other than her husband might see her, always ran away on their approach, covering herself with a sheet of bark. Until recently the women of Groote Eylandt copied the actions of the mythical woman, *Wuratilaku*. Whenever a strange man approached the camp they ran away, holding around their bodies sheets of hinged bark, called *inukumba*.[72]

Plate 135C, D illustrates the carved figure of *Wurati-laku*, the designs on the body representing those painted on the hinged sheet of bark, *inukumba*, which she always carried. The dots on her head represent the flower, *latulat*, she placed in her hair.

The Spirit Woman, Wulu-wulu

A number of these spirit women, or *Mokoi*, *Wulu-wulu*, live with a male *Mokoi*, *Kultana*, in the Gurila jungle, near Port Bradshaw. The *Wulumulu* assist the spirits of the *jiritja* dead on their journey to the *jiritja* 'heaven', Nalkuma,[73] by giving them as a passport the bean of a *menin* vine.

The central line on the carved figure of *Wulu-wulu*, Pl. 135E, is the trunk of the *menin* vine, the diagonals, the branches, and the ovals within the diagonals, the bean, *gurang-guru*,[74] which *Wulu-wulu* gives to the travelling spirits of the dead.

69. See origin of carved figures, p. 416.
70. Warner (1937), p. 431; Berndts (1949), p. 216. 71. See map, Fig. 4.
72. Tindale (1925), p. 71, mentions the strict seclusion of the aboriginal women at Groote Eylandt.
73. Bark painting, Pl. 100B. 74. Pl. 100A.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

The Wawalik Sisters

In the fragment of the *wawalik* ceremonies[75] which we witnessed at Yirrkalla the aborigines used two ceremonial poles. One, Pl. 138B, represents the elder sister whose blood, after she had given birth to a child, offended the serpent, *jurlungur*, which lived in the well, Mirrirmina; the other, Pl. 138A, represents the younger sister.[76]

The Ceremonial Poles. Plate 138B is the complete design on the sacred pole belonging to the elder *Wawalik* sister. The strip of frayed bark on top is her hair and the curving designs, the blood caused by the birth of her child.

Plate 138A belongs to the younger *Wawalik* sister. The lower triangular designs picture the water in the sacred well of *jurlungur*, the serpent. The parallel vertical lines in the upper portion indicate the water flowing into the well.

2. CEREMONIAL OBJECTS FROM NORTH-EASTERN ARNHEM LAND

The Fresh-water Tortoise, Mimala

This bull-roarer, shaped like a paddle, belongs to Diawirinja, west of Arnhem Bay, the totem place of the fresh-water tortoise, *Mimala*. The bull-roarer is so sacred that even its sound must not be heard by the women.

During a burial ceremony at Diawirinja in creation time the fresh-water tortoise, *Mimala*, then a man, made four bull-roarers, similar to the one illustrated, and buried them in those parts of the ceremonial ground over which everyone would dance. Though the women were assisting in the burial rituals, they, of course, were unaware of the sacred objects under their feet. At the conclusion of the rituals *Mimala* hunted the women away, dug the bull-roarers out of the sand and threw them into a nearby waterhole, where they have since been transformed into four large trees. Similar bull-roarers, after they have been used in the present-day *mimala* ceremonies of Diawirinja, are thrown into a sacred waterhole forbidden to the women. Being made of hard, durable wood, it is only necessary, the following year, to take the bull-roarers from the water and re-decorate them.[77]

Plate 144A, B is the obverse and reverse sides of the bull-roarer. The tortoise is shown in panel *a* on B, surrounded by dots indicating the bamboos growing in his totemic swamp. In panel *c* is *Mimala* again, accompanied by an unidentified diving bird with which he is linked in the myth.

Panel *b* on B, and *d*, *e* and *f* on A all picture hives of wild honey, the dots being the bees and the cross-hatched diamonds the honey. The transverse bars, *x*, *x*, *x*, on A and B symbolize the sacred waterhole into which the bull-roarers are thrown at the completion of the *mimala* ceremonies.

75. For more complete myth, see p. 275. 76. Bark painting, Pl. 88A.

77. These and similar sacred objects last for several years under water. If buried in the ground, they would soon be destroyed by termites.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

of the head, falling rain. The cross-hatched band across the forehead on Pl. 139J depicts the falling rain running down the face of the *Mokoi*.

The Spirit Woman, Urapali

There is a spirit woman, or *Mokoi*, called *Urapali*, at Blue Mud Bay who, when she took part in a burial ceremony, stabbed herself on the face and head with a sharpened bone in the same manner as do aboriginal women today on the death of one of their near relatives. *Urapali* still carries the marks both of the wounds and the blood which flowed from them.

Plate 140D, E illustrates the carved head of *Urapali*. On Pl. 140D the two groups of parallel lines under the eyes are tears she shed in her grief and the dots across the forehead and on the face, the self-inflicted wounds.

On Pl. 140E the white dots on the top of the head and along the side of the face indicate the places where *Urapali* wounded herself, and the meandering line along the lower jaw, the blood which flowed from those wounds.

The Spirit Man, Wulu-wulu

The spirit man, *Wulu-wulu*,[85] a *Mokoi* with a particularly dark skin, is associated in some undetermined manner with the *bilumbira* serpent of Cape Arnhem.

Plate 140F, G, H illustrates the carved head of *Wulu-wulu*.

On Pl. 140G the white dots on the dark face of the *Mokoi* represent falling rain. The serpent, *bilumbira*, occupies the central position on Pl. 140F. The dark crescent at *bilumbira*'s head indicates cirrus clouds; the light ground behind, the cumulus cloud in which the serpent travels; and the curving parallel lines on either side, falling rain.

On the opposite side of the head, Pl. 140H, is the serpent with its head in a cirrus cloud. The dark-coloured square immediately below the cloud is the totemic place at Cape Arnhem, where *bilumbira* lives in the trees.[86] The curving parallel lines in this panel indicate falling rain.

I. HUMAN FIGURES IN BARK

The aborigines at Yirrkalla make simple human figures by binding the soft bark of the paper-bark tree with string.[87] These bark figures are exhibited in some non-secret ceremonies, such as those of the *dua* spirit people (*Mokoi*).

85. It is possible that a fuller investigation would reveal the existence of *Wulu-wulu* men and women in a number of *jirrija* localities around Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw. See myth of *Wulu-wulu* women, p. 343, also bark painting, Pl. 109A.

86. Myth, p. 351.

87. Kaudern (1944), p. 300, records similar bark figures made by the natives of the Celebes to represent themselves and thus confuse the evil spirits. Worms (1942), Fig. 6, illustrates a similar bark figure associated with the Goramara ceremonies of south-western Australia.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Muragin OII7

Bunbulama and her brother, *W'ulunwait*, bark figures are also used in the burial ceremonies, where they are used to represent children. They are placed beside the corpse so that it will not be lonely.

The figures of *Bunbulama* and *W'ulunwait* have leaves and rushes stuck in the head for hair. In the bark painting, Pl. 94C, these represent the swamp grass in the rain-making bundles. Except for this, all the bark figures in my collection were similar in appearance. For that reason the figures of *Bunbulama* and *W'ulunwait* only are illustrated.

The myths associated with the bark painting, Pl. 94C, the carved figure, Pl. 133A, B, and the bark figures, Fig. 65C, D, suggest that the myth of the *Mokoi*, *Bunbulama* and her brother *W'ulunwait* covers two different activities. In the myth of the bark painting and the carved figure, the activities of the two *Mokoi* centre on rain-making. In the myth of the bark figure their chief function is to entertain the *dua* spirits of the dead on their journey from earth to their heaven, Purelku.

The *Mokoi*, *Bunbulama* and her brother *W'ulunwait*, live in a jungle called Mumukara, on the western shores of Melville Bay. In the early days *W'ulunwait* was a good hunter of turtles. One day, when out in his canoe, he sighted a particularly large *dua* turtle floating on the water, but in spite of all his care he could not get close enough to spear it. Disappointed, *W'ulunwait* returned and told *Bunbulama* about his bad luck. She persuaded him not to be worried about the loss of the turtle because, as there was always plenty of food on the sea coast and in the surrounding jungle, she would be able to collect sufficient food for them both. From then until now the woman, *Bunbulama*, has provided the food.

At the present time, however, it is the duty of these two *Mokoi* to entertain the *dua* spirits of the dead during the first evening of their journey to the *dua* heaven, Purelku. When it becomes dark the woman, *Bunbulama*, returning from the jungle with a bundle of red blossoms called *banamin*,[88] asks her brother to blow his drone tube, so that the travelling spirits will find *Bunbulama's* camp. When they arrive, everyone spends the hours of darkness in dance and ceremony, carrying in their hands the flowers gathered by *Bunbulama*.[89] As daylight approaches, the *dua* spirits of the dead depart on the next stage of their journey to Purelku, via Dambalin (Bremer Island), and the brother and sister go back into the dense jungle so that none of the aborigines can see them.

Figure 65C illustrates the bark figure of the woman, *Bunbulama*; Fig. 65D, her brother *W'ulunwait*. Both figures have grass stuck in their head and a projection from the chin which represents a beard.[90]

88. In another myth, this flower is called *wokoro-nani*, p. 327.

89. See myth of journey of the *dua* dead, p. 325.

90. My informants stated that the woman, *Bunbulama*, wore a beard, similar to that of her brother. This beard, however, is not shown on the bark painting of these two people, Pl. 94C.

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OII7 Murngin OII7

Burial and Mourning

Upon the death of a person, especially one of honour and influence, violent expressions of grief are indulged in. The men stand in groups, with spears reversed, with tears streaming down their faces, with the whole body relaxed into a drooping posture, and mournfully chant the death song of their tribe. Meanwhile, the women keep up a dreadful wailing, cut their heads with flints, shells, or sticks until the blood pours down their naked bodies, and throw themselves upon the ground in an utter abandonment of grief. These performances are repeated several times over, especially if fresh parties arrive at the camping ground. 152 763

Before the body is disposed of, there is painted upon it the totemic design of the horde to which the deceased belonged, and to the spirit or totemic centre of which the soul of the departed is believed to return. The body is disposed of either by interment in the ground or by being placed upon a platform constructed for the purpose. 764

In either case, after the body has decomposed, the bones are recovered by male relatives and painted with red ochre. A ceremony is then held, during which the bones are handed over to the female relatives of the deceased, and by them are carried about, sometimes for several years. For this purpose a cylinder of bark is constructed, which is also painted with the person's totemic symbols. Finally, another elaborate ceremony is held, when the bones are broken and deposited in a small hollow post, which is planted upright in the ground at any convenient place. 765

While the body is awaiting burial, certain near male relatives of the deceased make in the ground a representation of the particular totemic centre, and there ceremonially partake of food, which is known as "Wukandi." None of this food must be given to outsiders, nor must these men partake of food elsewhere. In this way they enter into communion with their departed brother, who is believed to be present with them in these ceremonial meals. 764

Shortly after the disposal of the body, the near relatives of the deceased pass through a purification ceremony, known as "Wontjurr," during which they are washed in a representation of the pool which constitutes the totemic or spirit centre of their 764 783

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

horde. Until this ceremony has been held, these individuals must not share food with others, and so are, for the time being, shut off from the normal life of the community. 764 783

Behind all these beliefs there exists a very rich mythology concerning the existence and exploits of culture heroes who are believed to have originated the customs of the people. 773

"Speak but the word; the Evangel shall awaken
Life in the lost, the hero in the slave."

—F. W. H. Myers

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

tion of other natural species—all phenomena which are necessary for the continuance and well-being of the people themselves. In keeping with this doctrine, a natural development has been the stress on procreation—the importance of pregnancy and child-birth, and the essential sequence of sexual intercourse and conception, expressed particularly in ritual and long song cycles.

In order to understand Kunapipi cult life and belief, it is necessary to summarize very briefly some of the other cults which flourish beside it in this area.

The Djanggawul myth, consisting of several hundreds of lengthy songs, relates the adventures of two men and two women, who in the Dreaming Period landed at Port Bradshaw, on the north-east Arnhem Land coast. They had journeyed across the sea from an island called Bralku, now known as the *dua* home of the dead, somewhere beyond Groote Eylandt. These Ancestral Beings are known generally as the Djanggawul, but had their own personal names. The leader was Djanggawul himself; the two women were his sisters, the younger Maralaitj, and the older Pildjiwuraroiju; and their companion was Bralbral, who plays only a minor part in this great cycle. In their canoe they brought a large conical *ngainmara* mat, which is now used particularly by the women, and also certain sacred *rangga* sticks possessing life-giving qualities. The mat symbolized the uterus; the *rangga* sticks were penes, and when not being used ritually, were kept hidden in the *ngainmara*.

As the Djanggawul journeyed along the coast, they met other Ancestral Beings like Laintjung and the Baijini, and Spirits such as Pomapoma, Kultana, Woijal, Burulu-burulu and others; but none of these had the procreating powers of the great Djanggawul. Djanggawul had an elongated penis; and his two sisters had long clitori which dragged on the ground as they walked. Djanggawul had sexual relations with his sisters, so that they were continually pregnant. From time to time, at the camps where they stayed, he would lift their clitori to one side, and put his hand up into the uteri to remove many children of both sexes: these were the ancestors of the present aborigines. The song cycle features the perpetual pregnancy of the two sisters, their uteri being likened to the *ngainmara* mats which they brought with them, while the people who are removed from them in childbirth are the *rangga*. It is said that a person's bones are like *rangga*, inherited from both the father and mother, who in turn inherited theirs through the generations of ancestors, right back to the Eternal Times of Djanggawul and the creative heroes. Therefore, at death, a person's material remains, as well as his spiritual substance, must be treated with respect, and surrounded by ritual.

An important aspect of this myth, second only to the theme of fertility, concerns the institution of sacred ritual. In the beginning,

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
OI17 Murngin OI17

But it is in the realm of the great song cycles and the stories which survive that a colourful picture of Malayan and Macassan life on these shores is unfolded.

At various sites on the north-east and south-east coast of Arnhem Land, at Arnhem Bay, Melville Bay, Port Bradshaw, Trial Bay, Caledon Bay and Groote Eylandt, these Indonesians of different types (not all true Macassan or Malay traders) founded their settlements. They built their houses on stilts, roofed them with woven leaves and fibre of coconut palm and even furnished them in an elementary way. They kept fowls,[2] fastened by one leg to the posts of the huts. Nearby they erected large boilers, and racks for drying the trepang, and out in the bays their ships were lying at anchor or being repaired. Each main settlement was a hive of industry, with Macassans and Australian Aborigines employed as labourers for specified payments. There were bartering depôts. Local natives brought in pearls, tortoise-shell and other natural products that the Indonesians wanted, and were given in exchange East Indies currency, introduced foods such as rice and sweetmeats, or cloth, knives and tobacco. This trade was well established and its influences are still apparent today.[3]

The visitors not only brought goods from their own country. While they were settled on the mainland they manufactured pottery, knives, cloth and sails, and they kept written accounts of their transactions with the Aborigines and with their own employees. The effects of their sojourn are seen in some forms of the local material culture. They introduced the dug-out canoe, which has almost replaced the indigenous bark variety, and it was from them that the natives learned to use steel in making knives, spear blades and tomahawks.

But it seems to have been in their diversions and entertainments, or in their ceremonies, that the Indonesians exerted their greatest influence on Aboriginal life. Watching them, the Aborigines learnt to play cards,[4] and began to adapt their song rhythms to alien tunes and the sounds of foreign musical instruments. Their mortuary ceremonies came to be associated with the departure of the praus, and with Macassan burial rites.[5] The important secular ceremony of the carved *wuramu* figure, the

first phrase means "return from hands", i.e. from handling the bones, the second "return from mouth". Payments in each case are made to the other near relatives. This is a ritual act and may be interpreted as a token "payment" or gesture in formal expiation of an infringement of the solidarity (the *marr*) of a group, members of which are bound together by the sharing of a special bond.

In the case of the ceremonial revelation of the jealously-guarded sacred totemic objects of the clans, with their intense solidarity, it was pointed out that the reciprocal gifts required are substantial and exacting, and I have shown that a considerable amount of organisation is required to enable a man to discharge these obligations.

But it must be remembered that there is also another side to these transactions to which reference has already been made, and that a man not only gains greatly in prestige and social status, and increases the scope of the ceremonial exchange cycle in which every individual of standing plays a part, but above all, the *marr* or "spiritual power" from the successful conduct of these reacts directly upon all his other activities. It assists him in hunting and brings him "good luck" (*tjämbait*) and as has been stated, it adds to his prestige, his social status.

A graphic illustration of the belief in the spiritual power which reposes in the sacred *räŋga*, occurred while I was living with these people. Immediately after the revelation of the *räŋga*, a ceremony associated with the sun totem of a clan called Maräŋo, a young man went out turtle hunting in his canoe, and returned with four turtles. The old men credited the success of the expedition to "good luck" (*tjämbait*) and claimed that the "body", really the "skin" (*kälŋa*) of the young man was still covered with

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

619 they also possess rituals and myths in common, and in many
614 cases, obvious dialects of one language.

Each of these groups is a patrilineal clan, the members (apart from the wives of the men), being all related in the male line; a social group consists of a man and his brothers and sisters, his children, his son's children, his brother's children and such like. Members of such a clan must never [582] marry one another, but only members of other clans, according to the kinship rules. This rule is called local exogamy. The members of the local clan, together with [621] their wives who have come to live with them (as is the [591] custom), are called a horde.

779 The most important feature of the local clan is the link
775 which binds its members to one or more sacred totemic
614 waterholes (or wells) in the clan country. The well was [778] formed by the cult totemic hero and ancestor of the clan. In it have sojourned from the great ancestral time the spirits of all those whose earthly course is run, that is, the souls of the dead. Also associated with the well are the clan's totemic emblems and ceremonies. One important function of the latter is the maintenance of the regular order [789] of the dry and wet seasons, and the link with the creative epoch of the totem. Incidentally the souls of the dead may take up their abode, not only in the well, but also in the totemic emblems, and are believed to be present at the great totemic ceremonies. In addition they are called upon to do their part in some rites, especially in connexion with burial. [764] For example, in Chapter 14, Mr Chaseling refers to a deceased child's grandfather chanting a prayer to his own dead brother (that is, the child's 'tribal' grandfather), to come and take the child back to Buralkor, the Island of the Dead. But though a deceased person's spirit goes to this island, it re- [778] turns to the totemic well in his clan's country. This may seem contradictory to us, but just as space and time were no obstacle to the great ancestresses who came from the island,

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

so it is with man's spirit. Moreover, according to native psychology, a man has two souls, and according to some beliefs, it is a man's bush or trickster spirit which goes to the Island of the Dead. But however that be, the more important of these two spirits of the dead does sojourn in the totemic well, and to make sure that the spirit arrives there, signs are made by pointing and singing to the grandfather to come for him. As one informant told Dr Warner, who studied the subject intensively, 'if we didn't sing, he might go bad because evil ghosts might catch him and take him out in the jungle country where they live. It is better that his old grandfather and his ancestors come and get him and take him straight to his clan well where his totem came from.'

Religion

Readers of Mr Chaseling's book will be impressed by the important part played by religion in the life of the Aborigines. Mythology and ritual, totemism and beliefs regarding the spirit of man, the Great Creator Spirit who is revealed in the Rainbow Serpent, and the 'mother goddess', are all part of this religious life. The ritual is the prescribed acting of the great myths by fully initiated men; the mythology provides the sanction and pattern for the rites and for present-day behaviour. The emphasis on the Creator Spirit (associated with the sky) and a kind of 'earth-mother' distinguished Arnhem Land from Central Australian mythology, though interest in the sky-world and a belief that it is the source of life-giving powers (especially through the Rainbow Serpent and the medicine-men), were widespread in Australia. Mr Chaseling's Chapter 17 shows how the natives of his region are fascinated by the sky-world and in their mythology reveal a desire to go to it.

Further details of north-east Arnhem Land myth and ritual are given in W. L. Warner's *A Black Civilization*. He also discusses fully the totemism of the region. A general

628 689 687 Murrkundi to lead the way because he wished to go into the bushes for a few moments. Unsuspectingly Murrkundi fell into the trap, and as he passed by, Burramai drove a spear through his arm and another into his back. Mortally wounded, Murrkundi fell to the ground and asked: 'What is all this about? Why have you speared me?'

'You know well enough. This is of your own making. When I was drinking I saw your reflection in the water as you fitted your spear to kill me.'

'If you think I intended to spear you, you are wrong. I never pointed the spear at you, I merely hooked it to my spear-thrower and pointed it away into the bush.'

'Well, I'm not like you and I don't understand your actions. If I see anyone pointing a spear at me I kill him.'

And with that Burramai turned on his heel and walked off, thinking to himself: 'He's not dead yet, but by midday the sun will be hot and he will die.'

Months later Murrkundi's friends found his skeleton and [764] performed the customary ghost-laying ceremonies prior to packing the bones in bark and sending them to his horde on Elcho Island.

Burramai skilfully evaded several plots to kill him for the death of Murrkundi, until eventually a big inter-tribal gathering was held in Arnhem Bay, and was preceded by [928] the usual peace-making ceremony in which old differences are settled. Burramai was present and went through his trial-by-ordeal and made peace with the relatives of the dead Murrkundi. Normally the matter should have ended there, but an old man went to Burramai as he sat in peace with his erstwhile enemies and abruptly reopened the dispute: 'Why did you kill Murrkundi? He didn't steal your wife or abuse your totem. Why did you spear him like a dog?' Old passions were revived. One unrestrained youth said: 'Let us finish him now.' Burramai, who was exhausted from the all-day trial-by-ordeal, then made the fatal error of

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safe for everyone to use. But the influence of the totem on the cylinder still remained in the axe, and it could therefore be used only by near relatives. To overcome this, Yama cut a canoe, thereby transferring the totemic influences to it. The dug-out was 'de-ghosted' in much the same way as if it had carried the actual bones; fish caught from it were ceremonially eaten, and it was switched with smoking twigs to drive off the tabu.

'Ghostly' help is freely sought by hunters to assist them in their search for food. It is generally accepted that if the ghost, or mali, of a dead man is harnessed it will assist in the hunt by rounding up fish, birds, or animals. A ghost dims the eyes of the game so they cannot see clearly, blocks their ears so they cannot hear the hunter, and plays such havoc with their noses that he is unrecognizable.

To obtain the assistance of such a ghost, a hunter must carry a 'maiwola' or small piece of bone, hair, skin, or blood from the corpse. Small bones, hair, or other parts of a body, may be had for the asking when a corpse is being dismembered in any normal burial ceremony, and these 'hunting-charms' are wrapped in bark and hung round the neck. The ghost, or mali, lurks near its skeleton and, as in the instance of a skeleton carried in a canoe, exerts influence over it and all that it touches. But when a hunter carries a piece of the body as a charm, he is able to control the ghost so that it does his bidding, and when he is hunting the ghost follows the charm. If it happens that several men have obtained charms from the same corpse, and in different parts of the country go hunting at the same time, the ghost will serve one and then hurry off to help another. This explains why charms are not always effective, for if a hunter catches nothing, that is because the ghost is otherwise engaged, or is away lurking by the main part of its skeleton, which is wrapped in bark and carried by a tribal mother.

Any strange event can be readily explained by attributing

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Burial Rites and Cannibalism

DEATH and burial customs are much the same from one end of Arnhem Land to the other. Bodies are artistically painted and decorated before they are buried or exposed on platforms or in trees. Later the bones are collected and hoarded by relatives till they feel disposed to deposit them in decorated burial posts. In one district bones are removed from the body and parts of the flesh are eaten in an effort to form a link with the dead. This ceremonial cannibalism is confined to three or four hordes, but all Arnhem Land nomads attempt to communicate with their dead and call on them for assistance.

Mau's young son slipped from an overhanging tree, and in falling into the water struck his head on a canoe. No one saw the accident and he was not missed till his body drifted downstream to the beach. Two youths carried the corpse to the camp, but by coming into contact with it they had attracted its spirit or 'mali', which lodged in their skin. Before they dared to eat any food they must needs free themselves from the ghost by smearing red-ochre on their arms.

That night the entire camp of several inter-related hordes combined in a ceremony conducted by the child's grandfather. Alternately he wailed and sang a prayer to the spirit of his dead brother, the child's tribal grandfather, asking him to come and take the young spirit to the spirit world of 'Buralkor'. The camp set about preventing the spirit or mali from haunting them, and drove it from the camp by switching their bodies with heated leafy twigs.

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764 Next day the grandfather painted totemic symbols on the body, and women relatives wailed and gashed their heads. About a mile from the camp the child's tribal 'grandsons' constructed the exposure-platform for the body, a very simple structure consisting of forked sticks to support the platform five feet high. Beneath it they scooped a depression so that anything falling from the dissolution might be easily buried.

[535] In the late afternoon everyone gathered about this platform. Relatives danced and the women wailed and performed their characteristic body-swaying and rhythmical shuffling from one foot to the other. A tribal 'grandson' climbed to the platform to arrange the body and covered it with leaves, twigs and bark so that birds could not disturb it. As this was nearing completion, the grandfather burst into a wailing dirge, calling on the spirits of his father and brother to come and take the child to the spirit-land. The child's father and uncles also danced toward the platform, urging the young spirit to depart for Buralkor.

765 At the end of four days we went back in the early morning for the bones of the child. Men sat in one group, and women in another, near the body, on the crest of a sand dune overlooking a wide billowing jungle which fell away toward the leaden, hazy sea from which the sun was rising. To the accompaniment of a desultory singing-wail, the platform was lowered and the tribal 'grandsons' collected the bones. A breeze blowing in from the sea left no doubt about the state of the body, and a concerted move was made to scratch together fallen eucalypt leaves, which the women lit with firesticks. The resulting pungent aroma of burning gum leaves was very welcome. Actual dismemberment was realistic enough; bones and joints were raised and beaten with sticks until separated into lengths suitable for wrapping in bark bundles. Refuse, twigs, and bark were dropped into the depression under the platform, and the heavy forked

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sticks were pulled out and thrown on the heap to deter inquisitive dingoes. 765

Meantime the grandfather sang songs appropriate to the departing spirit, the most important being the plover song. A plover is a spirit from Buralkor disguised with feathers so that mortals may see it, and its purpose is to guide human spirits on their way to the spirit world. Native-companions, geese, jungle fowls, and cockatoos are similarly revered by the Yiritja moiety, except that they have no qualms about eating them. Moreover, these are genuine birds and not visible spirits like the plover. Their importance lies in their supernatural ability to see spirits and to assist them. 765 533 825 [975]

As the grandfather sang the bird-songs, his sons accompanied him with clap-sticks and women danced and made the bird-signs. For the plover they held their hands in front of their shoulders with the fingers half clenched like talons; this gesture is also used ordinarily in their sign-language to indicate death, a corpse, or wandering ghost. Geese were introduced by imitating their cries and by holding short sticks between the hands for bird-perches. Long-winged native-companions could not be mistaken when the dancers extended their arms and flapped them. At the end of the ceremony a tribal-mother carried the bones to her camp and deposited them in the fork of a tree; in bush-camps such parcels can be seen in trees or in forked sticks. Skulls are of more importance and are painted and hoarded for as long as ten years. 765 535 201 825 765

It is usual to expose infants and to bury older children and adults, though no particular significance is attached to either method and both are preliminaries to the collecting of the skeleton. A corpse is buried in a shallow grave face downwards to facilitate the removal of the bones by lifting the backbone to which the greater part of the skeleton is attached. Bones may be collected in four or five days, a week or several months after burial, depending on the regard the [966] [964]

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mainland to hunt for turtle eggs, the island is deserted.

I saw hordes behind Boucaut Bay practising a form of cannibalism and eating their dead. A wealth of tradition lies behind this custom, which originated with the eating of their tribal Ancestress. This prehistoric giantess came from the west and finihed her labours at Boucaut Bay, where she made a plain and a swamp full of vegetable food and fish. Near by she bor: children and established the local hordes. Many years late the Goddess died and left the horde the problem of disposing of her body. She had been an active Goddess, and th: hordes had depended on her, and now, as they had no desire to lose the prestige she had given them, they retained her strength by eating her body.

The precedent of the Goddess is advanced as the reason for continuing the custom of eating dead relatives and enemies killed in battle. All hair is scraped off and burnt, intestines are renoved and buried, and the head is severed from the trunk Meanwhile relatives prepare an oven by digging a trench, lining it with stones, and lighting a fire on top. When the tempo of singing and dancing has increased to fever-pitch, the skull is pierced and the brain removed, wrapped in bark, and given to the mother to guard. The skul is cooked, separately cleaned, painted, and hoarded. Removing the bones is a lengthy process and must be done carefully so as not to sever the limbs. All bones are exposed in a tree to bleach before being painted and hoarded till it is convenient to pack them in a burial-post.

When the stones in the trench are hot, the coals are scraped away, and a relative grasps the hands of the now boneless and headless body, drapes it over his shoulders and dances among the chanting, wailing horde. It is lowered into the trench-oven, covered with bark and sand and allowed to cook to the accompaniment of singing and dancing. Most chants relate to the departing spirit, and in

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them the strength of the dead man is urged to enter the bodies of those who have consumed his flesh. 266 764 [533]

Nomads cheerfully admitted that they enjoy the feasts, but pointed out that aged, deformed, sick, or diseased men are never eaten. These have no virtue and would weaken rather than strengthen those participating in the rite.

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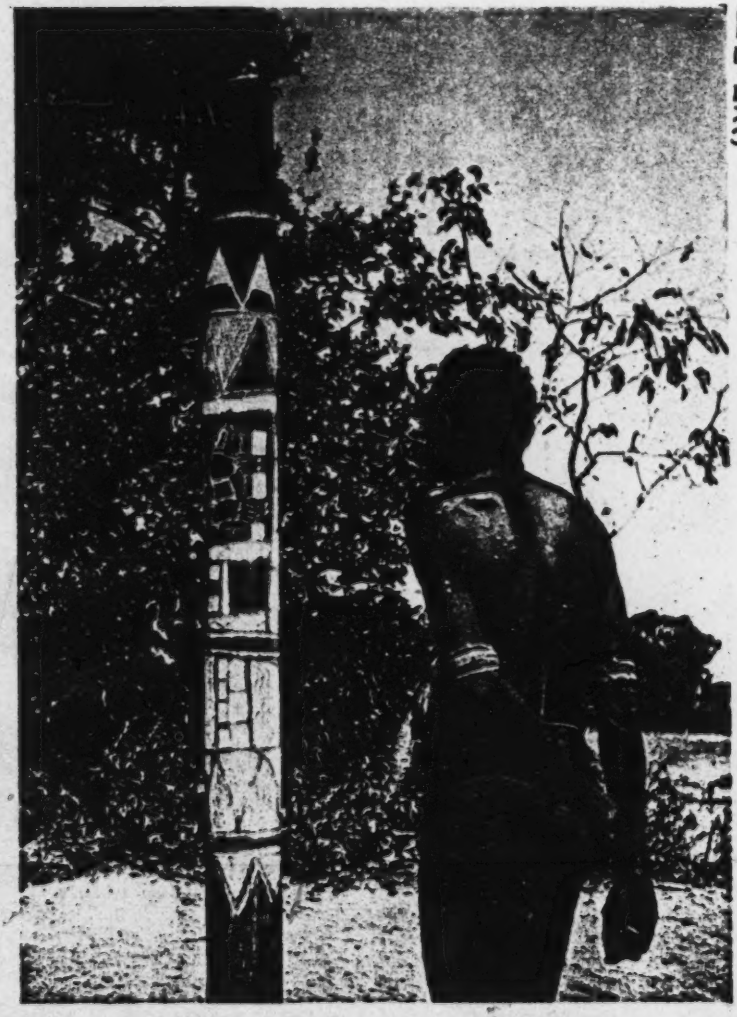

BURIAL POST IN A DESERTED CAMP

[facing P150]